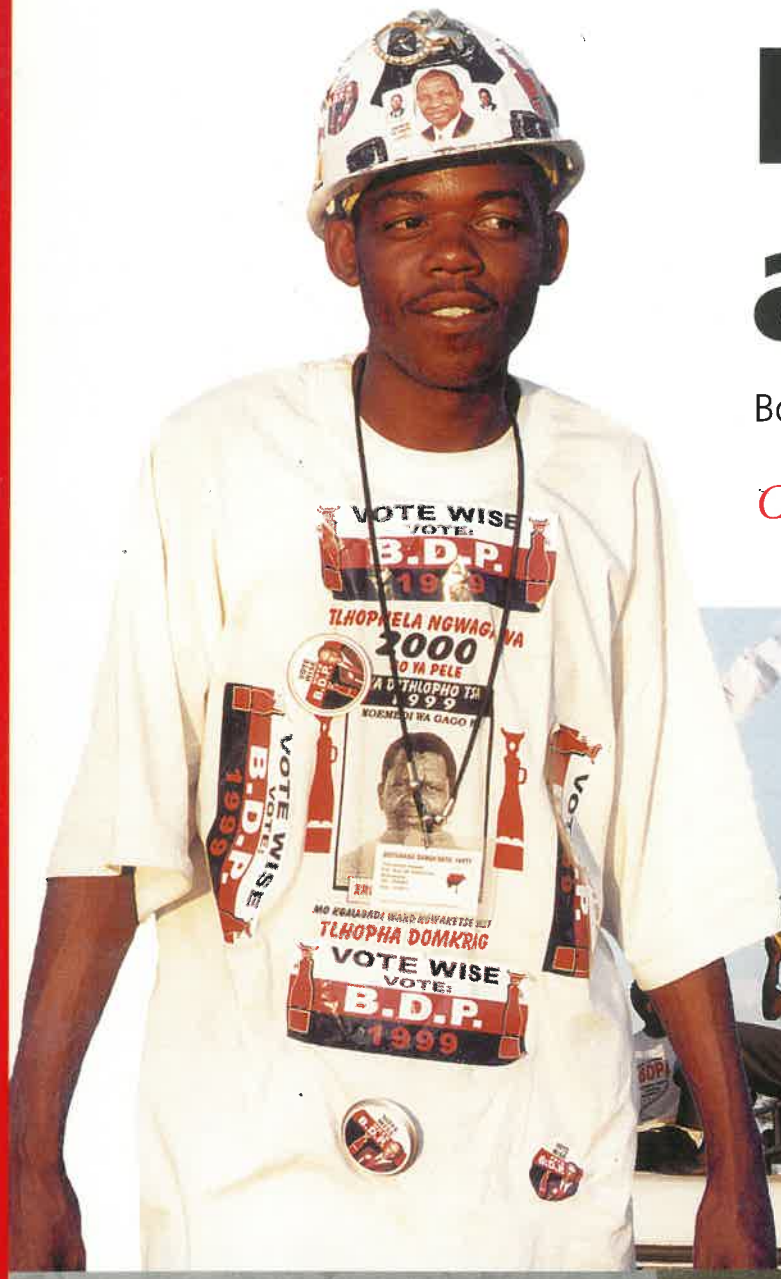
LETSEMA LE TSWELETSE
BDP
BEYOND 40 YEARS OF PROGRESS
TSHOLETSA DOMKRAG

Raising a nation

Botswana Democratic Party: 1962 – 2002

Commemorative Brochure



Raising a nation

Botswana Democratic Party: 1962 – 2002

Commemorative Brochure

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To those who brought us

here, living and departed

We must fight against all the forces which could divide us as a nation. One such danger might stem from differences in tribe or race

– **Sir Seretse Khama**

addressing the BDP Annual Conference,
Molepolole, 28 March 1970

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Central

2001 – 2003

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Chairman of Youth Wing
Gomolemo Motswaledi

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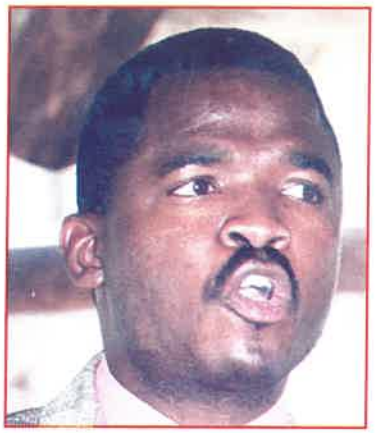

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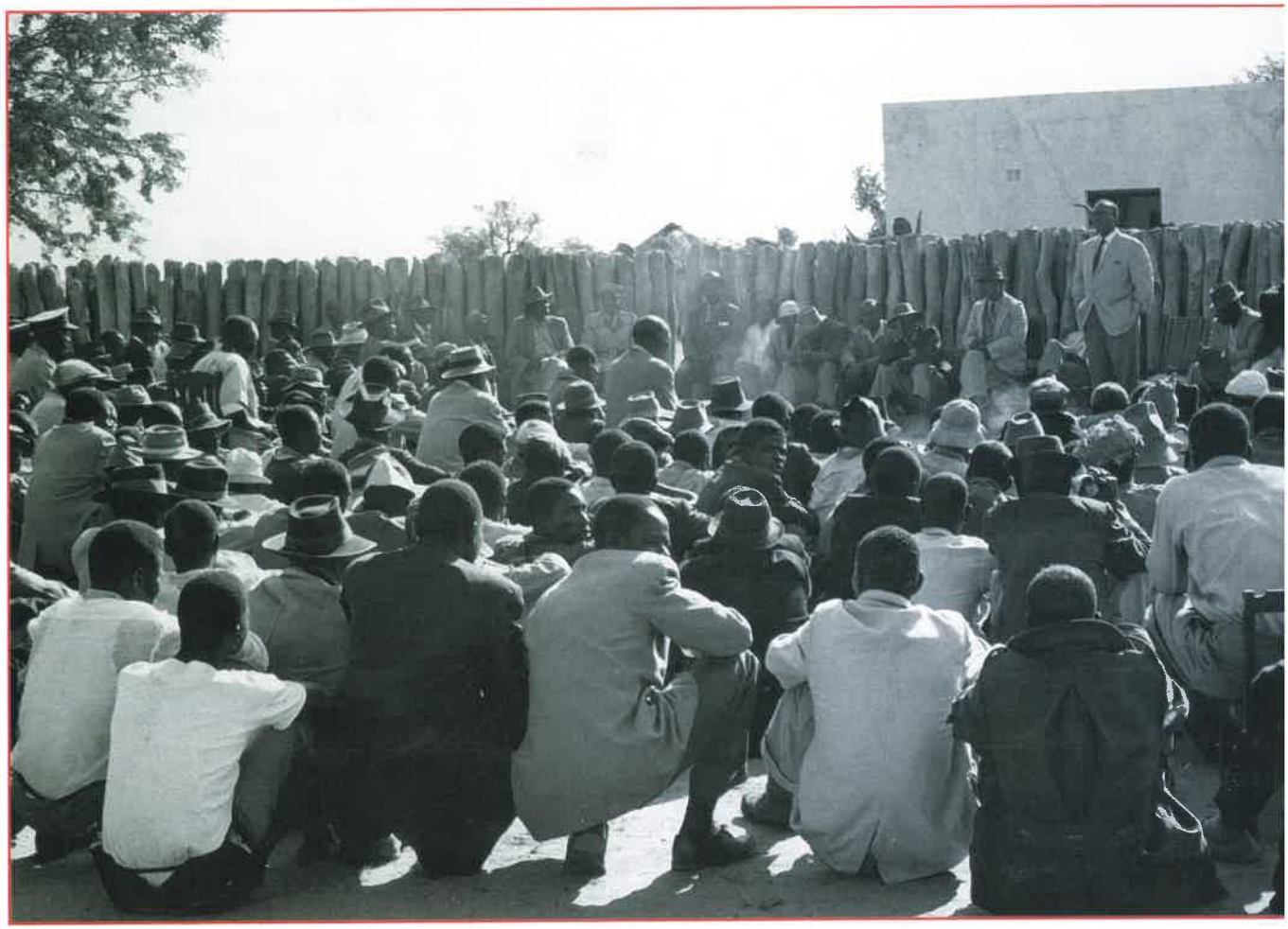


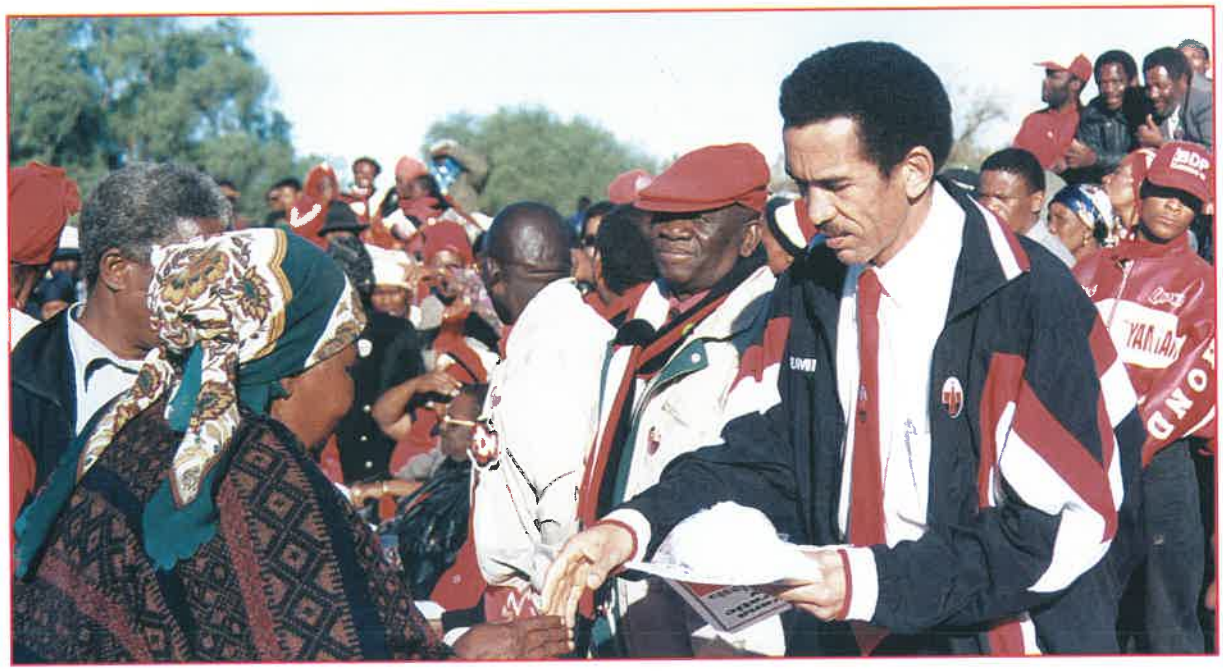
Seretse Khama addressing a kgotla meeting in Serowe

The message Batswana have always responded positively to

Dr. Margaret Nasha recaptured Gaborone Central from the opposition in 1999

The people come out to make a point

A BDP motorcade in 1984



Lt. General Seretse Khama Ian Khama on the campaign trail

The people show their true colours

Sir Ketumile Masire salutes BDP supporters in Kanye

Youth leaders at a Youth Wing congress

Moutlakgola Nwako and Jimmy Haskins

Party Chairman Ponatshego Kedikilwe and President Festus Mogae

Mrs Dambe, the first woman mayor in Botswana

Dr. Gaositwe Chiepe, Bahiti Temane, Ronald Sebego, and Lt. General Mompati Merafhe

Secretary General Daniel Kwelagobe

A unifying vision

"Kagisano should not merely be a slogan for our party, but an ideal for our nation. What are the roots of Kagisano? ...It has always been our custom that members of a family should help each other face and overcome the problems of life. The well known proverb "kgetsi ya tsie e kgonwa ka go tshwaraganelwa" accurately sums up our approach to national policy and to life in general. What we are trying to do in the new Botswana is in fact nothing new. We are simply applying a well-established value, applied in the family, the ward and the tribe to the wider concept of nationhood."

– Sir Seretse Khama

speaking at the 11th Annual Conference of the BDP in Francistown, 1 April 1972.

It is often only with hindsight that one can appreciate the full significance of a historical moment. Over the past four decades the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) or "Domkrag" has transformed Botswana into a model of democratic development. Through sound economic management and sustained social investment in its citizen's welfare, BDP governments have lifted Botswana up from being one of the globe's poorest countries at independence to middle income status with a high level of human development. Domkrag's record of good governance is further reflected in Botswana's record of respect for human rights, the rule of law, high international credit rating and ranking as one of the world's least corrupt societies. Few could have predicted such a unique record of achievement in February 1962 when a group of humble patriots gathered at Gaborone to launch the party that has ever since shaped the destiny of a nation.

Of diverse origin, the BDP's founding figures were united in their determination to transform the collection of Tribal Reserves, Crownlands, and concession areas that made up the then British-administered Bechuanaland Protectorate into an independent, non-racial and prosperous nation that would transcend ethnic and regional divisions. They further recognised that genuine liberation would not be achieved through the uncritical adoption of external agendas and ideologies. Preferring evolution to revolution, they instead chose to adapt indigenous democratic norms of consultation (therisanyo) and free speech (mmualebe o bua la gagwe) as the corner stones for building both their party and nation.

The BDP's unifying vision was reflected in the Party's original Aims and Objectives. Thereafter it found expression as the national ideal of promoting Kagisano (unity, peace, mutual harmony) through the four guiding principals: Unity (popagano ya sechaba), Democracy (puso ya batho ka batho), Development (ditiro tsa ditlhabololo) and Self-reliance (boipelego).

Decolonising nationalism, as expressed through mass based political parties, only emerged in Botswana from the 1950s. This relatively late beginning can be partly attributed to the peculiar fact that until the last decade of colonial era, nationalism was commonly equated with the retention,

February - The BDP is launched in Gaborone with an Executive Committee consisting of Seretse Khama (President), Archelaus Tsoebebe (Vice-President), Quett Masire (Secretary-General), Benjamin Steinberg (Treasurer), and Moutlakgola Nwako (Deputy-Treasurer)

July - Legco adopts BDP motion to investigate racial discrimination in Bechuanaland

October- Seretse embarks on his first overseas tour as BDP leader

rather than rejection, of British rule. This was because there long existed a consensus among Protectorate Batswana that the colonial status quo was preferable to the alternative of incorporation into the white minority dominated territories of either South Africa or Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Thus, for many decades, nationalist minded Batswana were ironically stronger advocates of imperial control than some of the imperialists themselves.

Botswana's independence became viable with the removal of the incorporation threat. There is no single moment from which to date the failure of South African efforts to take over Botswana. But the likelihood of such a transfer receded after the 1953 re-election of the pro-Apartheid National Party. In this respect, British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill's April 1954 warning to South Africa against "needlessly" bringing up the incorporation issue has been seen as a turning point.

Preferring evolution to revolution, they instead chose to adapt indigenous democratic norms of consultation (therisanyo) and free speech (mmualebe o bua la gagwe) as the corner stones for building both their party and nation.

The alternative spectre of racist domination by Rhodesian settlers was revived by the August 1953 formation of the Central African Federation, which consisted of then Nyasaland (Malawi) as well as Southern and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). Along with colonial officials, some of the leading Dikgosi and white settlers, who formed the Protectorate's Joint Advisory Council (JAC), were initially attracted to the idea of joining the Federation. Their leading opponent was Seretse Khama, who understood that the Federation's supposedly multi-racial structures entrenched white minority rule. In his landmark inaugural speech before the JAC, in April 1958, Khama put forward his own independent vision, affirming that:

"I think it is time that we ourselves in Bechuanaland, who neither belong to the Union of South Africa nor the Federation, or any other part as far as I can see, except Great Britain, should try to formulate a policy of our own which is probably unique to us. And that is a policy, perhaps, of even teaching those countries who profess to be more advanced than ourselves, that in as far as administration and race relationships [are concerned] they have more to learn from us than we from them. I must say, quite frankly that I have been rather disturbed to find that on the whole there is a tendency to look always over our shoulders. Perhaps I am wrong; if so I stand corrected. We want to see what is happening elsewhere instead of getting on with what we know is peculiar to us and to the country itself. We should get on and have no fear that we may incur someone's displeasure, as long as what we do is internationally accepted...And if we are right I am afraid emotion must come into this; we should not bother very much with what anyone might say...We have ample opportunity in this country to teach people how human beings can live together."

Khama ultimately convinced the JAC to reject the Federation. During the same Council session the British government finally agreed to allow for limited self-government through the establishment of a Legislative Council or "Legco". Nominated to sit on the committee to draw up Legco's constitution Khama, along with many other progressive Batswana, was bitterly disappointed when the colonial administration insisted that the new body would, like the JAC, consist of 10 indirectly elected African representatives sitting alongside 10 European representatives elected by the territory's tiny white settler community. He was also strongly opposed to allowing South African citizens to vote in Legco elections and the continued location of the Protectorate's administrative headquarters in Mafikeng. 40

1963

July-August - BDP participates in Constitutional Talks in Lobatse

September - First issue of BDP Newspaper, Therisanyo, comes out

Birth of the BDP

Vice President Quett Masire, President Kenneth Kaunda and President Seretse Khama

Throughout, 1961 there was a growing call for Seretse Khama to lead a political alternative to the Botswana Peoples Party. Recovering from ill health, he moved cautiously. He wanted to make sure that any such party was both progressive and national in its scope. Thus, in June 1961, he turned down a proposal by the white political leader, Russell England, to form a "multi-racial" movement to be known as the Liberal Party. He also turned down proposals to revive the Federal Party seeing its champions as being too tied to the politics of bogosi

Khama finally made his public move in October 1961 at a four-day kgotla debate at the Serowe kgotla, in which many called for the BPP to be banned within GammaNgwato as a threat to traditional order. Others, while expressing reservations about the BPP, spoke in favour of freedom of association, assembly and speech as part of a process of moving towards greater democracy. When he rose to speak on the last day, Khama appealed to both camps. In his speech he "agreed that the People's Party was confusing the people and was out to cause dissension between the tribe, Government and white inhabitants of the Territory". He therefore proposed that:

"The people should unite and form an organisation with proper leaders which would be a power in the land and which would be able not only to stop the damage being caused by the People's Party but which would be able to advise

December - Amos Dambe and Englishman Kgabo appointed fulltime regional BDP organisers

1964

March - BDP's Third Annual Conference affirms that Botswana is part of "the reawakening giant of Africa"

Government as to what should be done to further the interests of the Territory."

Among the first people to embrace Khama's call were his colleagues in the reformed Ngwato Tribal Administration such as Goareng Mosinyi, G.G. Sebeso, Lenyeletse Seretse and Moutlakgola Nwako. To organise a true territory wide movement, his next step was to reach out to fellow members of the African Council and Legco, which had already become forums for the coalescing of key activists unaffiliated with the BPP. At the second Legco session in November 1961, Khama called a caucus of all the African members. There he put forward his proposal for a new "Bechuanaland National Democratic Party". Except for Dikgosi Bathoen and Mokgosi, who chose to remain above party politics, all present agreed to join. Among them was Quett Masire, who Khama already saw as the key person in winning over support in the southern Protectorate.

Khama, Masire, Nwako and Archelaus Tsoebebe were charged with drafting a constitution for the party, which was presented and approved at a follow-up meeting at Mahalapye in January 1962. A month later, on February 28, the BDP was publicly launched under a morula tree in Gaborone. This venue was chosen on the day of the launch after permission was withdrawn for them to meet at Mochudi. The Bakgatla regent, Mmusi Pilane, had been pressured by some of his conservative councillors and neighbouring Dikgosi to stop the meeting. Notwithstanding this setback, the Party followers managed to assemble and elect an Executive Committee consisting of Khama (President), Tsoebebe (Vice-President), Masire (Secretary-General), Benjamin Steinberg, a wealthy white trader and rancher (Treasurer), and Nwako (Deputy-Treasurer).

The aborted Mochudi meeting showed the distance that existed between the new party and some prominent Dikgosi. In this respect, notwithstanding Khama's royal pedigree, Domkrag was never a "chiefs party" in its convictions.

Notwithstanding its ultimate success, the BDP's triumph looked far from certain at the time of its birth. At the beginning the party was confronted with the fact that its main rival, the BPP, had a head start in both recruitment and fundraising. But, this gap was overcome. Outside of GammaNgwato, where Khama's traditional standing assured a solid base of initial support, it was largely through tireless grassroots organising that the BDP was transformed from an elite network into a genuinely national movement. Much of the credit for the BDP's initial organisation belongs to Masire who, in the Party's first months, drew up and began distributing a statement of Aims and Objectives, subsequently published as "Maitlamo le Maikaelelo".

Unlike the BPP, which by 1962 was still concentrating its efforts along the line of rail, Masire immediately set about recruiting activists in all of the country's regions and villages. He started off by sitting down "to write letters to anyone I could think of". There were also personal approaches. Many of the people Masire initially contacted were those he had known as editor of Naledi Ya BaTswana. Others were teachers, progressive farmers, and old Tiger Kloof acquaintances. One such early recruit was Englishman Kgabo of Molepolole, who agreed to serve as the party's southern regional organiser. Many others also freely volunteered their time to promote the party, including Nwako in Letswapong, Amos Dambe in the North East, and David Keatlaretse in the North West. Such direct lobbying of leading community members paid off. For example, of the 64 members of the reformed Bakwena Tribal Council that was established in 1961, 43 became active supporters of the BDP while only four associated themselves with the BPP.

In the rural areas BDP rallies soon attracted large crowds. It was during one such event that the

1964

May - Seretse and Ruth Khama visit Zambia as guests of Kenneth Kaunda to promote ties between BDP and United National Independence Party

August - Khama addresses United Nations Special Committee on Colonialism in New York, also visits UK, Kenya and Tanzania. Holds discussions with Kenyan Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta and Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere.

Figure 1:

Aims and Objects of the Bechuanaland Democratic Party 1962

Objects-

- At all times to promote the welfare of the people of Bechuanaland in accordance with the Principals of the Party;
- To attain one man one vote and an African majority in the Legislative Council by the next elections;
- To attain full internal self-government based on a proper ministerial system by the following elections; and
- To attain an economically viable and fully independent state thereafter, using every available form of financial and other assistance.

Attendant principals-

- To protect fundamental human rights and to tolerate no forms of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or creed;
- To recognise that Bechuanaland is the home of African Tribal and non-tribal communities together with minority communities of other races, all of which form one nation, and that all of these communities are entitled to enjoy their own religion, language and way of life, have a stake in the economic progress and good government of the country, which must nevertheless be essentially the government of the [black] majority community;
- To tolerate no interference in the affairs of Bechuanaland from the outside;
- To improve tribal administration in Bechuanaland by the formation in all tribes of Executive Committees elected by, and responsible to Tribal Councils; by the substitution of constitutional rule for the exercise of arbitrary powers by dikgosi, and by the introduction of proper elections to the Tribal Councils;
- To develop the economy and natural resources of Bechuanaland energetically and to provide equal opportunities to all who are prepared to work for the good of Bechuanaland;
- To encourage the development of co-operative societies;
- To raise the raise the prosperity, and standard of living of all people in Bechuanaland;
- To intensify education and improve health services;
- To staff the civil service of Bechuanaland from the people of the territory, except where suitable candidates are not available, and to take energetic steps to fit the young men and women of Bechuanaland, both within and out of the service, for appointment in all grades of the service;
- To strengthen labour and the trade union movements, so tat no man may be exploited by his employer, but that all may work to foster the economic strength of the country;
- To encourage all people of Bechuanaland to live together I harmony;
- To support the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter.

"Domkrag" name became associated with the party. There is a difference of opinion as to whether the name began as a BPP supporters' taunt. Another version has it that the name came from an enthusiastic supporter who could not pronounce the word "Democratic". What is clear is that the image of the jack ("domkrag" in Afrikaans) lifting up the nation was quickly adopted by party members so that by the time of the first election it had become the party's official ballot symbol. BDP progress in the urban areas of Francistown and Lobatse BDP was slower. At one early rally in Francistown, Matante taunted the BDP saying:

"*Ke bale MaDomkraga, ba re ba dirile phuthego, mme ba naene (nine) o ka re ba ja legapu!*" ("Look at the BDP meeting of nine people, they are like a group gathered to eat a melon!").

But, even in the BPP strongholds the BDP by 1964 was attracting its own large following. Chronic infighting within the BPP, which ultimately resulted in Matante, Mpho and Motsete each leading their own parties, convinced more people to shift their allegiance to the BDP. 40

1965

March - BDP wins landslide victory in Botswana's first national election, and Khama is sworn in as Prime Minister

April - Seretse Khama tells BDP delegates that his Government's intention is to accelerate Botswana's path to independence

The struggle for supremacy

In July-August 1963, the move towards independence began in earnest when the British convened a Constitutional Review Conference at Lobatse with representatives of the political parties, that is the BPP factions of Matante and Mpho, which thereafter adopted the name Botswana Independence Party (BIP), along with the BDP, Chiefs, and white settler community. Seretse Khama, Quett Masire and Moutlakgola Nwako represented the BDP. Having done their homework, the BDP delegation was able to take the lead during the proceedings. Unlike any of the other delegations, they had drawn up their own detailed proposals to match against those of the colonial Government clause by clause.

The Conference resulted in a new democratic Constitution with a non-racial legislature elected by one-person one vote. For the BDP negotiators, the result was a triumph. Botswana's future was now in the hands of whichever nationalist politicians managed to win the upcoming election. Only a few Europeans had openly opposed the reforms. To drum up support, some of them briefly formed a "Tuli Block Democratic Party", which should not be confused with the BDP.

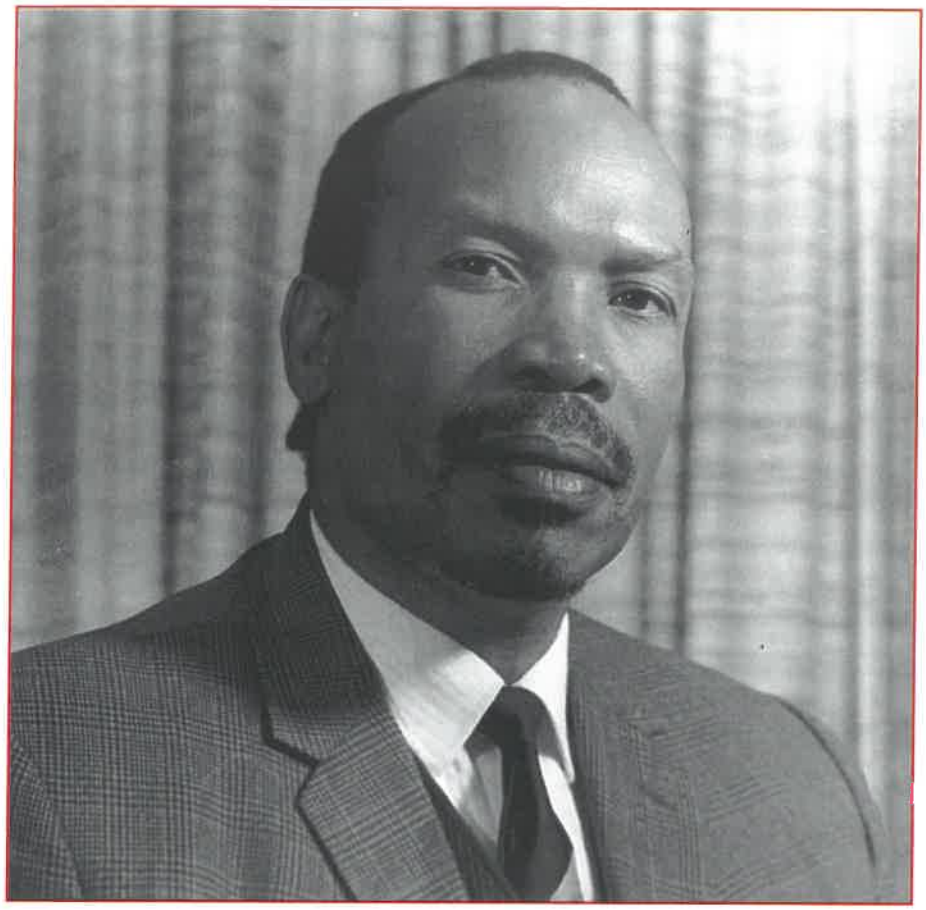
In the immediate aftermath of the conference, the BDP launched a nation-wide campaign to publicise both itself and the new dispensation. As part of this campaign in September 1963 the Party introduced a newspaper, Therisanyo, which was published on a monthly basis between 1964-67. The country's first non-government periodical, Therisanyo was edited and largely written by Masire, who today maintains that the paper aided the party in popularising its basic programme among the literate and its electoral symbol among the illiterate.

The BDP national executive also devoted a great deal of energy in addressing meetings in all corners of the Protectorate. In a single month of February 1964, the party held 60 rallies, even though 11 others were abandoned because Seretse was ill at the time. Masire travelled over 5,000 kilometres between the 7th and the 23rd of that month across some of the remotest corners of the Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, and western Kweneng districts to address 24 inaugural meetings. In the process he recruited future parliamentarians like Eyes Reokoaeng, Boy Moapare, and N.S. Sekga into the BDP fold. All three were elected in 1965 unopposed. Meanwhile, Amos Dambe held 20 meetings in Bobirwa and Bukalanga, helping to consolidate Domkrag in the rural north-east,

1966

February - Independence talks in London

April - Fifth Annual Conference of BDP focuses on dual challenge of Independence and Drought



The official portrait of Sir Seretse Khama as Botswana's President

while Archelaus Tsoebebe held another 16 meetings in Kgatleng, eastern Kweneng and southern GammaNgwato.

In early 1964, the Government announced that the Protectorate's first one-person one-vote elections would be held in March 1965. A year was required to count and register the voting population, and so what was up until then the most comprehensive population survey was carried out. The Government also carried out its own information campaign to explain to the people the new electoral system. True to form, the BDP co-operated wholeheartedly in the exercise. Ever suspicious, Matante's BPP charged that the registration process was being rigged.

With elections approaching, the campaigns of the parties stood in sharp contrast. The BDP were well prepared by election day with candidates and organised supporters in every one of the 31 constituencies. The other parties struggled to nominate candidates in the rural areas and in many places failed. Most of the BDP's electioneering was done on either foot or bicycle. It was only in the months immediately before the election that the party was able to purchase two Chevrolet trucks to assist its campaign. In the final weeks, much of the political activity was concentrated in the south-east, which appeared to contain the most marginal constituencies.

When the results did come in, the BDP had won by a landslide. They captured 28 seats, with the remaining three going to Matante's BPP. The BIP was shutout, while Motsete lost his deposit running in Lobatse. Of the approximately 140,000 voters, some 81% cast their ballots for Domkrag, 14% for Matante's BPP and slightly less then 5% for BIP.

September - BDP forms independent Botswana's first government with Seretse Khama as President, and Quett Masire as Vice President

1967

March - Sixth Annual Conference of BDP affirms the Party's commitment to continued democratisation of local government

Figure 2

1965 Election Results for BDP by Constituency

Constituency	Candidate	Margin
1. Maun & Chobe	D.R. Monwela	2446 (48%)
2. Okavango	T. Tsheko	1929(62%)
3. Ngamiland	G.M. Mphapha	2054 (97%)
4. Ghanzi	N.S. Sekga	Unopposed
5. Kgalagadi	B.M. Moapare	Unopposed
6. Tati W. (Lost)	J. Anderson	1013 (26%)
7. Francistown & Tati E. (lost)	O. Segopolo	1214 (21%)
8. Sebina & Gweta	M. Maswikiti	4193 (88%)
9. Nkange	O. Chilume	4193 (88%)
10. Botletle	B. Stienberg	5451 (97%)
11. Tonota	L. Makgekgenene	3291 (61%)
12. Madinare	A.M. Dambe	6144 (96%)
13. Bobirwa	A.M. Tsoebebe	5382 (98%)
14. Serowe N.	S. Khama	5909 (98%)
15. Serowe S.	B. Kgari	4808 (97%)
16. Tswapong N.	M.P.K. Nwako	4949 (87%)
17. Tswapong S.	G. Sebeso	5118 (95%)
18. Shoshong	G. Mosinyi	6292 (95%)
19. Mahalapye	G.K. Koma	6271 (93%)
20. Kgatleng & Tlokweng	M.K. Segokgo	2814 (65%)
21. Mochudi (Lost)	R.D. Molefe	1278 (33%)
22. Molepolole N.	Rev. S.A. Thobega	2933 (82%)
23. Molepolole E.	E. Kgabo	3555 (79%)
24. Kweneng S.	J.O.M. Nkoane	5321 (91%)
25. Kweneng W.	E.G. Reokwaeng	Unopposed
26. Gaberones & Ramoutswa	N.C. Molomo	4069 (86%)
27. Moshupa	E.S.K. Masisi	4463 (96%)
28. Kanye S.	Q.K.J. Masire	3700 (96%)
29. Kanye N.	B. Chibana	4483 (95%)
30. Ngwaketsi & Kgalagadi	P. Sebotho	5718 (95%)
31. Lobatsi & Barolong	B.C. Thema	4655 (80%)
TOTAL BDP VOTE:	**113165 (81%)**	

1968

May - Seventh Annual Conference of BDP focuses on integrated development, self-sufficiency and regional issues

August - State visit by President Kenneth Kaunda

Challenges at independence

For years Botswana was surrounded by hostile minority regimes. In 1978, 15 members of the Botswana Defence Force were killed by Rhodesian forces. President Seretse Khama and Lady Khama led the nation in mourning the fallen soldiers

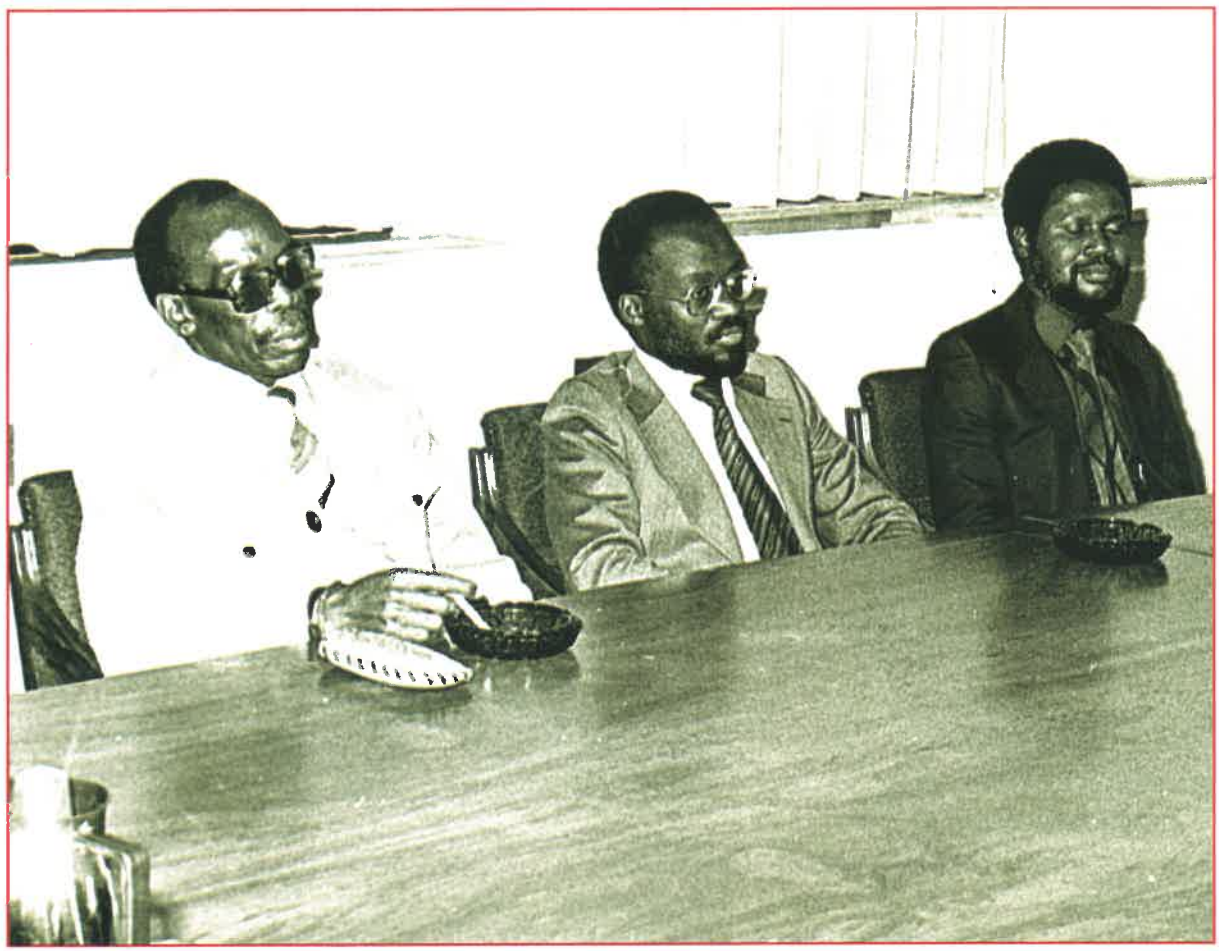
1969

September - BDP election manifesto sets out the four guiding principals - democracy, development, self-reliance and unity

October - BDP wins pivotal first post independence election with reduced majority

With its electoral mandate the BDP wasted no time in forming a Government. On 9 March 1965, Seretse Khama was sworn in as the first Prime Minister of the now self-governing Bechuanaland Protectorate. The other members of his cabinet were Quett Masire, as Deputy Prime Minister, Moutlakgola Nwako, Minister of Agriculture, Amos Dambe, Minister of Mines, David Morgan, Minister of Works and Communications, Benjamin Thema, Minister of Labour & Social Services, and Tsheko Tsheko, Minister of Local Government. Finance remained under colonial government control. In the weeks that followed, the cabinet held over 150 meetings throughout the country to reintroduce themselves as government responsible to all of the people. Already the possibility of an accelerated transition towards full independence was on the minds of the leaders. Khama made these thoughts public for the first time on April 16 when he used the BDP's first post-election conference at Serowe to announce to the cheering delegates that: "As a government your leaders are giving careful consideration to the timing of Independence, and you will be kept appraised of developments in this direction."

Shortly thereafter, Khama began to openly speak of "independence next year". But the obsta-



Sir Sereste Khama with his technocrats, Lebang Mpotokwane and Samuel Mpuchane

1970

March - Ninth Annual Conference of BDP focuses on application of four guiding principals to domestic and international challenges

September - The first comprehensive National Development Plan, NDP 2, launched

cles to realising independence were immense. Years of colonial neglect had assured that in terms of both human and material infrastructure, Bechuanaland was among the world's least developed territories. With an annual per capita income of about 60 Rand, most people lived in extreme poverty. Of the 73,000 Batswana who were formally employed, out of a total population of 580,000, most worked as migrant labourers in neighbouring territories.

To make matters worse, 1965-66 proved to be a year of severe drought. By the winter of 1966, over half of the population was receiving food aid. Looking back a few years later Khama summed up the challenges as follows:

"The basic physical and social infrastructure was sadly deficient, if not almost totally lacking. Roads, and telecommunications, water and power supplies were totally inadequate to provide a base for industrial development. Most important of all the colonial government had failed to recognise the need to educate and train our people so that they could run their own country. Not one single secondary school was completed by the colonial Government during the seventy years of British rule...

"Because of past neglect the administrative machine we inherited at independence was defective and ill-equipped to meet the challenge of development. Above all it was largely staffed by expatriates from Britain and South Africa. Now, while many of these men were able and dedicated and ready to identify with our aspirations, others were sceptical of our chances and less than enthusiastic in their support of our policies.

"Finally, because of the low level of education in Botswana, the nature of traditional society, the scattered population and the relative isolation of Botswana from the rest of Africa, there was a low level of political consciousness among our people- if by political consciousness one means the understanding and determination to express political and social ideas through modern political institutions."

In addition to the above socio-economic obstacles, self-governing Botswana faced the external challenge of being surrounded on almost all sides by hostile white minority regimes. Only on the Zambezi at Kazungula did Botswana's border connect with that of free Zambia. Botswana's freedom was further compromised by economic dependence on South Africa, which until 1965 was symbolised by the location of the territory's administrative headquarters at Mafikeng. Leading members of the party had a history of sympathy with the liberation struggle. Indeed when the first ANC exiles led by Oliver Tambo fled into the Protectorate in 1960, Khama and Lenyeletse Seretse had organised sanctuary for them in Serowe. But from early on, the BDP recognised that an independent Botswana would be forced to balance its sympathies against practical constraints. As the BDP's third annual conference in March 1964 noted:

"At this, it may be fitting to make some reference to our stand as a Party to this most complex problem of the oppressed peoples with reference in particular to our standpoint as regards to political refugees from the Republic of South Africa. Quite frankly, it must be recognised that our Territory is to a very large extent dependent on the Republic and that as much as possible a good neighbour policy towards the state must be fostered by the government and peoples of Bechuanaland for their own good. We would not, however, support keeping out in the cold, or shutting our door in the face of anyone who for fear lest the ninety day clause were invoked against him, or lest he might be fleeing across the border charged for being a member of a banned political organisation."

In the months immediately before independence, the regional situation was further complicated by the white minority regime in Southern Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence, which triggered both internation-

1971
April - Tenth Annual Conference of BDP focuses on need to maintain social harmony in the face of development

1972
April - Eleventh Annual Conference of BDP adopts Kagisano as core concept

October - Constitutional amendment passed relieving the President of the need to stand and sit as a parliamentary candidate for a constituency

One of the early challenges at independece was provision of basic services like electricity

al sanctions and armed struggle within the country. On the eve of independence, in August 1966, Zimbabwean and ANC freedom fighters crossed into Botswana for the first time. In this context Khama, as part of his first Presidential address to the National Assembly on 6 October 1966, affirmed that while the country would continue to provide safe haven for refugees it would not allow itself to be used as a base for armed attacks on any neighbouring states. Initial international understanding of Botswana's delicate regional position was greatly facilitated by the fraternal ties the BDP had begun to establish with other political movements on the continent, particularly the independence parties in Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya. 40

1973
April - Twelfth Annual Conference of BDP focuses on regional challenges

1974
September - BDP Election Manifesto premised on Kagisano as a unifying national ideology

Building a nation

"The real obstacles to progress are found in ourselves - our attitudes to change and initiative, our ignorance of what must be done and what each must do, our customary practices for example in respect to land tenure and other matter which inhibit progress.... We cannot develop rapidly unless we are willing to change our society. Development can only take place in a social environment which welcomes and controls change."

– Vice-President **Quett Masire** commenting on the challenges of development in April 1970.

The period coinciding with the first BDP administration, 1965-69, was marked by unprecedented series of reforms and initiatives that laid a firm foundation for subsequent years of progress. After a hectic period in which much of the Government's attention was drawn to the need to create almost overnight the basic administrative machinery of an independent state at Gaborone, attention could be refocused on broader needs. While the fortuitous discovery of diamonds in 1967 would ultimately bring wealth to the country, in the early years of independence, Government had to rely on donor funding for many development projects. In this respect the BDP administration

October - BDP wins third national election with increased majority. Archie Mogwe, Gaositwe Chiepe, Kebatlamang Morake, Daniel Kwelagobe, Peter Mmusi, and Lenyeletse Seretse join Parliament and Cabinet

1975

March - Fourteenth Annual Conference of BDP

earned an international reputation for its appropriate and efficient use of external finance to invest in its citizen's welfare. This allowed for a steady expansion of such human services as public health, education, utilities and communications. Additional resources were invested in industrial development, most notably the mining operations at Orapa, Morupule, and Selebi-Phikwe. As a result, during the first decade of BDP rule there was a significant increase in local wealth and employment, while the majority of Batswana began to gain access for the first time to such basic human services as health, education and safe water supplies. This progress translated into significant improvement in most citizens' quality of life.

BDP's first Secretary General, Ketumile Masire

On the political front, the BDP was determined to pursue its vision of building a united and democratic nation out of Botswana's many tribes or ethnic communities. This inevitably led to some conflict with more conservative Dikgosi or traditional leaders who resented reforms such as the Tribal Land Act, which transferred the power to allocate land from the Dikgosi to new Land Boards, and Matimela Act that gave government officials control over stray cattle. A few Dikgosi envied the powers being given to their counterparts as collaborators in the Bantustan administrations in South Africa.

The first post-independence national election, in 1969, proved to be an important turning point. By this time the BDP faced a new electoral opponent, the Botswana National Front (BNF). Initially formed as a left-wing party composed mainly of frustrated former BPP members, the BNF was greatly boosted in 1969 when the influential Bangwaketse Kgosi Bathoen II was enlisted as its President. Bathoen was prominent among the traditionalists who opposed BDP reforms that reduced the powers and autonomy of Chieftainship.

Bathoen's entry into party politics presented the BDP with an especially formidable challenge in the Southern District. As Kgosi of the Bangwaketse for 41 years he was revered by many of his subjects as a dedicated and effective, if authoritarian, leader. Against the advice of many, the BDP Secretary-General, Masire, decided to oppose Bathoen head-on in the Ngwaketse South (Kanye) constituency rather than run for a safer seat. It was a contest about differing visions, as well as between two eminent personalities. Bathoen, who had close ties to Tswana chiefs inside South Africa, openly favoured establishing ties with the emerging Bophuthatswana "homeland". Masire thus accused his opponent of favouring a "Tswanastan", which he described as "a society in which Chiefs rule in barren home-

1976

April - Fifteenth Annual Conference of BDP calls for citizens to support establishment of Gaborone University Campus.
Pula becomes the National Currency

September - Botswana celebrates its first decade of Independence

lands".

Unfazed, Bathoen openly advocated a closer and more co-operative relationship with both South Africa and Rhodesia. While Masire spoke of finding peaceful ways of helping "our oppressed brothers in Rhodesia", Bathoen told the Rand Daily Mail: "We live in a glass house and cannot afford to throw stones." In other interviews Bathoen said Botswana should concede that South Africa had a common border with Zambia at Kazungula, and supported the Apartheid regime's notorious Immorality Act.

Of perhaps greater significance was the struggle over domestic issues. Masire warned against "the revival of feudal privileges and the reassertion of arbitrary political authority". The BDP manifesto further stated:

"The Chiefs still have a role under the new democratic political order. but it is for them to demonstrate to the people that they are capable of discharging their responsibilities in a manner that is fully compatible with the best interests of the people and the nation... The next BDP government will examine the role of Chiefs, Chief's Representatives, and Headmen in order to devise a system more compatible with popular aspirations and demands for good government."

The campaigning was equally tough in other parts of the country. In the North East, the BNF was accused of trying to make inroads against both the BDP and BPP by pandering to tribal sentiments. BDP leaders thus often dismissed the BNF as "an unholy alliance of tribalists, feudalists, and would-be Marxists".

At the national level the final outcome of the 1969 campaign was a triumph for the BDP, marred by local setbacks in Kanye, where Masire lost to Bathoen, and Okavango, where Tsheko Tsheko lost to the BIP leader Motsamai Mpho. Overall the Party secured 68.4% of the vote and 24 out of 31 constituencies. Despite this somewhat reduced margin of victory when compared to the Party's 1965 landslide, the BDP had campaigned for and won a clear mandate to move forward with its programme of democratisation and development. While even the BPP leader, Philip Matante, spoke of Masire as having lost to "feudalism", on hindsight the 1969 election can be seen as a clear victory of democratic nationalism over traditional tribalism. 40

Figure 3

1965-99 Election Results by Popular Vote Percentage

Party	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999
BDP	81%	68%	77%	75%	68%	65%	55%	57%
BNF	—	14%	11%	13%	20%	27%	37%	26%
BCP	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12%
BPP	14%	12%	7%	7%	7%	4%	4%	—
BIP/IFP		5%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	4%
BAM	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5%
Others		1%	0	0	.5%	2%	2%	.5%

Figure 4

1965-99 Election Results by Number of Constituencies Won

Party	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999
BDP	28	24	27	29	28	31	31	37
BNF	—	3	2	2	5	3	13	6
BCP	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
BPP	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	0
BIP/IFP		0	1	0	0	0	0	0
BAM	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0

1978

May - Seventeenth Annual Conference of BDP strongly rejects any suggestion of establishing a one party state in Botswana. Seretse Khama receives the Nansen Medal in recognition of the Botswana Government's outstanding service to refugees from Angola, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia

1979

October - BDP wins fourth national election with increased majority. BDP candidate Gaositwe Chiepe becomes first elected woman MP

The second decade

Enormous advances marked the decade that followed the 1969 election in socio-economic development. Throughout this period Botswana enjoyed the highest growth in both income, 14.5% per annum, and human development in the world. In December 1971, Seretse Khama proudly announced that Botswana had achieved financial as well as political independence with a balanced budget for 1972-73. This development came earlier than originally expected as a result of increased customs revenues, from 1.4 million Rands in 1969-70 to 12.5 million in 1972-73, as well as mineral development. As a result Government was able to finance the Accelerated Rural Development Programme, which began placing modern infrastructure in the larger villages. This supplemented the Third National Development Plan (1973-78), which had been the product of extensive grass roots consultation as well as expert advice.

In 1976 Botswana reached an important economic milestone when it was able to replace the South African Rand with its own currency, the Pula. This move, over the objections of the International Monetary Fund, enabled Botswana to build up its own foreign reserves, which have since become the envy of others.

The sudden break-up of the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland late in 1975 proved to be a blessing when Batswana rallied around Governments call to contribute to the building of the Gaborone campus of what, in 1983, formally became the University of Botswana. Enormous progress was also made in primary, secondary, non-formal and vocational training during the decade in accordance with Government's blueprint of "Education for Kagisano".

Botswana's domestic success continued to be threatened by violent oppression elsewhere in the region. The BDP's 12th Conference at Lobatse in April 1973 came out in strong support of Zambia whose major transport routes had been cut by the Rhodesians. On a practical level the Conference wholeheartedly endorsed Government's plan to ease Zambia's food shortage with subsidised exports of Botswana beef.

The growing threat of regional instability to Botswana's continued progress was explicitly recognised and evaluated in the BDP's September 1974 Election message to the nation, which observed:

"We live in a world in which one man's problem easily becomes another's. Violence spills over frontiers. It is both an interest and obligation for Botswana to work as best it can for the resolution of problems confronting our continent. Our geographical position carries with it responsibilities which are the concern of our people and of the Botswana Democratic Party. But this external

1980

April - Botswana plays leading role in launch of the Southern African development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC)

July - Sir Ketumile Masire succeeds Sir Seretse Khama as President

Zambian President Dr. Kenneth Kaunda is met by President Seretse Khama, Mrs. Tsheko and Minister Tsheko Tsheko

threat can be withstood more easily if we guard ourselves against the threat from within. We must protect ourselves from the weaknesses within our society, which our enemies seek to exploit. We must defend our independence by defending our developing non-racialism and social justice for all. The B.D.P. is pledged to build a strong society, in which all our citizens, irrespective of race, tribe or occupation, can fulfil themselves as much as possible and live together in peace and dignity."

The above message was, in part, aimed at the BNF, which entered the election divided between

1981
Botswana hit by drought and falling diamond market

1982
Diamond Mine at Jwaneng begins production

1983
Vice-President and BDP founding figure Lenyeletse Seretse dies

From one of the world's poorest countries, Botswana has become one of the world's best performing economies

rival factions wishing to have closer ties with either the Apartheid regime or the anti-Apartheid liberation movements. The election itself saw a resurgence of support for the BDP, which won back three seats, including one for Masire in Ngwaketse West, while having its percentage of the popular vote climb back to 77%. The Party went on to score another landslide mandate in the 1979 elections, which saw an impressive increase in voter participation.

In 1974 Botswana became a founder member of the Front Line States. The term was coined my Masire when, representing the BDP, he addressed the annual conference of Zambia's ruling party in August 1973. Although Botswana continued to ban armed freedom fighters from operating in Botswana, the BDP continued to maintain sympathetic relations with the liberation movements.

This policy was resented by the minority regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), who occasionally sent armed groups into Botswana as a form of intimidation. Rhodesian attacks along Botswana's north-east border intensified in November-December 1976, with brazen attacks on Moroka Village and the Police Mobile Unit barracks at Francistown. In response, in 1977 the Botswana Defence Force was formed. A few months later tragedy struck when Rhodesian troops once more entered Botswana in February 1978, ambushing and killing 15 soldiers and 2 civilians at Lesoma. It fell to Masire to speak to the nation. Reiterating Botswana's "well-known policy of not permitting our country to be used as a springboard for attacks against our neighbours"; he condemned the "unprovoked attack" as "the act of an insane regime". Despite further acts of aggression under the BDP, Botswana continued to maintain its principled opposition to white minority rule. 40

1984
Quett Masire successfully leads BDP to general elections for the first time as party leader

1985
June - Twelve Gaborone residents murdered by South African Defence Force

Masire's presidency

"The Republic of Botswana has been fortunate that at the time of its greatest need it could call on a man of the stature of Seretse Khama to be its first President. We would have wished for the continued leadership of Seretse Khama for many years, but we can take comfort, and he can take pride, in the fact that the foundations of this country and this nation are well laid and that if we who follow him can continue his task in a rational and constructive way that the future of Botswana is well assured"

– Vice President Quett Masire

On Sunday 13 July 1980, it fell on Quett Masire's shoulders to be the bearer of sad news, announcing over Radio Botswana that President Seretse Khama had died earlier that morning. In a subsequent address he reassured the bereaved nation:

"The Republic of Botswana has been fortunate that at the time of its greatest need it could call on a man of the stature of Seretse Khama to be its first President. We would have wished for the continued leadership of Seretse Khama for many years, but we can take comfort, and he can take pride, in the fact that the foundations of this country and this nation are well laid and that if we who follow him can continue his task in a rational and constructive way that the future of Botswana is well assured"

Although widely anticipated in the international press, Masire's accession to the presidency was not a foregone conclusion. Despite the fact that Masire was the vice-president, there were some who thought of challenging his leadership. The issue was soon settled, however, when Masire won the overwhelming support of the BDP Parliamentary Caucus. Thereafter the Party as a whole rallied behind his leadership. He presided over the remainder of the late Khama's term until 1984, when he led the BDP to its fifth straight victory in national elections. Masire was subsequently re-elected in 1984,1989 and 1994.

Seeing the country through severe drought and an early 1980s slump in diamond sales, Masire's presidency was characterised by continued high rates of economic growth and social development. By the mid-nineties Botswana was ranked number one among the nations of Sub-

1986
September - Batswana enthusiastically celebrate twenty years of independence

1989
BDP wins sixth national election with increased majority

President Festus Mogae in conversation with Sir Ketumile Masire

Saharan Africa in its overall quality of life and human development indicators. Particularly impressive was the rise of women in all walks of life including the professions.

By the end of the decade the UN ranked Botswana not only the highest in Africa but among the highest in the world in terms of the percentage of women occupying professional positions. This development gave rise to a good deal of soul searching within the BDP, as well as and the country as a whole. In the past, political leadership had had a patriarchal quality. The country's first female MP, the BDP's Gaositwe Chiepe, had entered Parliament as a specially elected representative in 1974, but in 1979 she ran for and convincingly won the Serowe South constituency. Encouraged by the growing strength and confidence of the BDP Women's League, many other women followed, becoming increasingly prominent as both public and party office bearers. Today their numbers include six BDP members of cabinet.

After three decades in power, half as Vice-President and half as President, late in 1997 Masire announced his intention to retire in the New Year. The announcement came just over a year after he had pushed forward a process of widespread consultation on a new long-term vision to guide the nation in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. The resulting document, popularly known as "Vision 2016", has been widely embraced by civil society. 40

1990
Batswana welcome Nelson Mandela in Gaborone

1992
Festus Mogae becomes Vice-President

On the shoulders of giants

Botswana Democratic Party's founders and early leaders were trailblazers in their own right. It was due to their determination, dedication, and selflessness that BDP is where it is today. These are some of them

Dr. Gaositwe Keagakwa Tibe Chiepe (1920-)

An educationist and diplomat, as well as politician, Dr. Chiepe was born in Serowe. The daughter of a well-respected moruti, Tibe Chiepe, from her early years at Khama Memorial School, she excelled as a scholar. In 1939, she became one of the first commoners, a well as females, to be awarded a government bursary to attend secondary school at Tiger Kloof. There she became the school's best student and head female prefect.

In 1944, Chiepe was awarded a scholarship to study at Fort Hare University. She graduated in 1947, the first Botswana woman to obtain a university degree. In 1959, she also became the first Botswana woman to obtain a post-graduate degree, earning an MA from Bristol University for

1994
BDP wins seventh national election with reduced majority

1996
President Masire launches consultations on a Long term Vision for Botswana

her comparative study of educational systems.

From 1948-70, Chiepe played a leading role in establishing the framework for a national system of education in Botswana. In 1970, she stepped down as Director of Education to become High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and Ambassador to European Community states. In the latter capacity, she played an active role in the negotiation of the first Lome Convention, which notably secured access to the European markets for Botswana's beef.

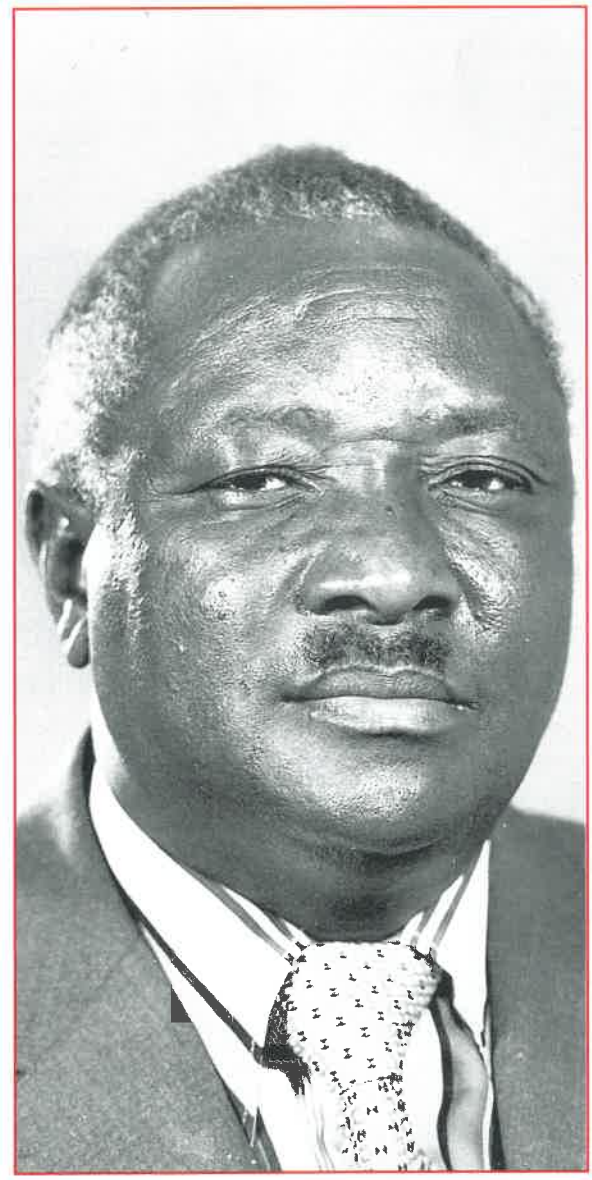
In 1974, Chiepe was specially elected to become the first woman MP. She was subsequently elected to represent the Serowe South constituency, the seat she would hold for the next two decades. Once in Parliament, Chiepe was promoted to cabinet with the portfolio for Commerce and Industry (1974-77), followed by Mineral Resources and Water Affairs (1977-84). In the latter position, she oversaw the rapid expansion of Botswana's diamond, copper-nickel, and coal output.

Between 1984 and 1994, Chiepe served as Minister for External Affairs. In this role, she proved to be a formidable critic in international forums of apartheid South Africa's campaign of regional destabilisation.

As Minister for Education (1994-99) Chiepe presided over the implementation of the 1993 Revised National Education Policy.

Motlatsi Keseabetswe Segokgo (1928-1977)

Born in Tlokweng, Motlatsi Segokgo resigned as the Headteacher of the Batlokwa National School in 1964 to enter full time politics as a member of the BDP. He was elected to Parliament in 1965 and held various cabinet portfolios.



Englishman M.K. Kgabo (1925-1992)

A founding member of the BDP and member of the Cabinet from 1966-89, Kgabo began his public career as a teacher, then as secretary of the Bakwena Tribal Administration. Kgabo's organisational work for the BDP in Kweneng helped to establish the District as one of the Party's strongest bases. For much of his time in Cabinet he served as the Minister of Local Government and Lands.

1997
President Masire announces his intention to step down in the new year

1998
Festus Mogae becomes the third President of the Republic with Lt. General Seretse Khama Ian Khama as his Vice-President

Amos Manyangwa Dambe (1911-91)

Dambe belonged to a generation of BaKalanga patriots who rejected ethnic separatism in favour of nationalism. His later life as a leading BDP politician, cabinet minister, and diplomat was shaped by his personal drive for academic achievement.

Dambe began his formal schooling in 1923, but progress was soon disrupted by the Nswazwi School's closure. Thereafter, Dambe traveled extensively in his quest for further education, studying at Dombodema, Tiger Kloof, and Motsete's Tati Training Institute, before earning a Teacher's Certificate at Adam's College in Natal.

Between 1946-49 Dambe was stationed in the Middle East as a sergeant in the elite High Commission Territories Corps, earning one of the unit's four British Empire Medals. Upon his return, he organised an association of educated BaKalanga. He also began writing newspaper articles on his people's plight, often using the nom-de-plum "Push and Pull."

Dambe's network of BaKalanga progressives found common ground with many young Bangwato, such as Lenyeletse Seretse and Moutlakgola Nwako, in calling for the Central District's democratisation along with Seretse Khama's return from exile. This alliance proved to be a precursor of later efforts to reconcile BaKalanga and Bangwato opinion within the nationalist political parties. Dambe also became active in the wider political arena as the treasurer of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Teacher's Association.

Dambe was involved in the formation of the BDP. At the party's first formal meeting, on February 28, 1962, he was elected to the Executive Committee as Vice Secretary. Thereafter he assumed primary responsibility for spreading Domkrag's message in the Northeast. In March 1965, he captured the Mmadinare constituency, receiving 6,144 votes against a total of 279 cast for his two opponents. Thereafter he held the portfolios of Mines, Commerce, and Industry (1965-66), Home Affairs (1966-69), Works and Communications (1969-70), and Agriculture (1970-72).

In 1972 Dambe left parliament to assume the duties of Ambassador to the USA and High Commissioner to Canada. Ready to allow a new generation to take up his struggle, he retired to his farm in 1976.

1999
The BDP win the eighth national elections with an increased majority. BDP parliamentarians include seven women

2002
BDP introduces new system of primary elections

Moutlakgola Nwako (1922-2002)

One of the political architects of modern Botswana, during his long and distinguished career of public service, Nwako occupied a number of cabinet portfolios before retiring in 1999 as Speaker of the National Assembly.

As a boy, Nwako attended Khama Memorial School. Thereafter, in 1943, he went to Tiger Kloof Institute, where he completed his secondary education. After completing his studies, he worked in the tribal treasuries at Molepolole and Serowe, before becoming the bursar at Moeng College.

Throughout the 1950s, Nwako was among a group of young educated GammaNgwato based progressives who called for political reform as well as the return of Seretse Khama from involuntary British exile. Like Nwako, many members of this group, such as Monametsi Chiepe, Lenyeletse Seretse, and Gaolese and Kenneth Koma, belonged to the Malekantwa age-regiment (mophato). In 1952-53, the Malekantwa activists, along with such older figures as Kgalemang Motsete and Leetile Raditladi, came together to form a political movement initially known as the Bamangwato National Congress. The Congress stood as a new third force in GammaNgwato politics between the rival camps of older traditionalists led by Tshekedi Khama and Keaboka Kgamane (pro-Seretse).

During the period, Nwako also began writing for newspapers, especially Naledi ya Batswana and African Echo, using the name "Tribesman". Through his private as well as public correspondence, Nwako kept in touch with fellow activists of his generation located elsewhere in the Protectorate.

In 1960, Nwako stood and was elected to the Executive of the Bangwato Tribal Council. In 1961, he was further elected to the new territory-wide African Council, establishing himself as one of the up-and-coming northern Protectorate politicians.

Late in 1960, Nwako's former classmate Motsamai Mpho approached him about forming

a new nationalist movement, which would become known as the People's Party (BPP). By then the Congress and subsequent Federal Party led by Raditladi had failed to attract mass support. In January 1961, Nwako did join a BPP delegation that met the British Resident Commissioner, Peter Fawcus, to protest inequities in the electoral structures of the Legislative Council (Legco).

Ultimately, Nwako was not attracted to the BPP. Instead, by August 1961, he was part of a core group gathered by Seretse Khama to discuss the formation of an alternative movement. Thereafter, one of Nwako's early tasks was to help bring prominent people from outside of Gammangwato into the organisation.

Nwako helped write the Party's constitution, which was approved at a January 1961 meeting in Mahalapye. Thereafter he served on its five man Executive as Assistant Treasurer.

In July-August 1963, Nwako joined Khama and Masire in representing the BDP at the Constitutional Review Conference convened by Fawcus at Lobatse. In the run up to the first national elections, which were held in March 1965, Nwako spent much of his time campaigning for the BDP. In this, he often used a bicycle to move around GammaNgwato villages. When the votes were counted, Nwako won a landslide victory in the Tswapong North constituency, whose support he retained for another three decades.

After the 1965 election, Nwako served in Botswana's first Cabinet as Minister of Agriculture. Thereafter, he occupied a number of portfolios including Foreign Affairs, before settling in as Minister of Commerce and Industry from 1977 to 1989. In October 1966, as Minister of State, he presented Botswana's case for admission to the United Nations.

In 1989, Nwako retired from Cabinet to assume the role of Speaker of the House until 1999.

Archibald Mogwe (1921-)

The top Motswana in the colonial civil service at the time of Botswana's independence, Archie Mogwe was educated at Tiger Kloof where he was a star pupil. In 1944 he became a teacher and spent a decade in the Free State as the boarding master of Mooderport School. From 1974-94 he served in Cabinet as Minister of External Affairs, and Mineral Resources and Water Affairs.

Bakwena Kgari (1921-1977)

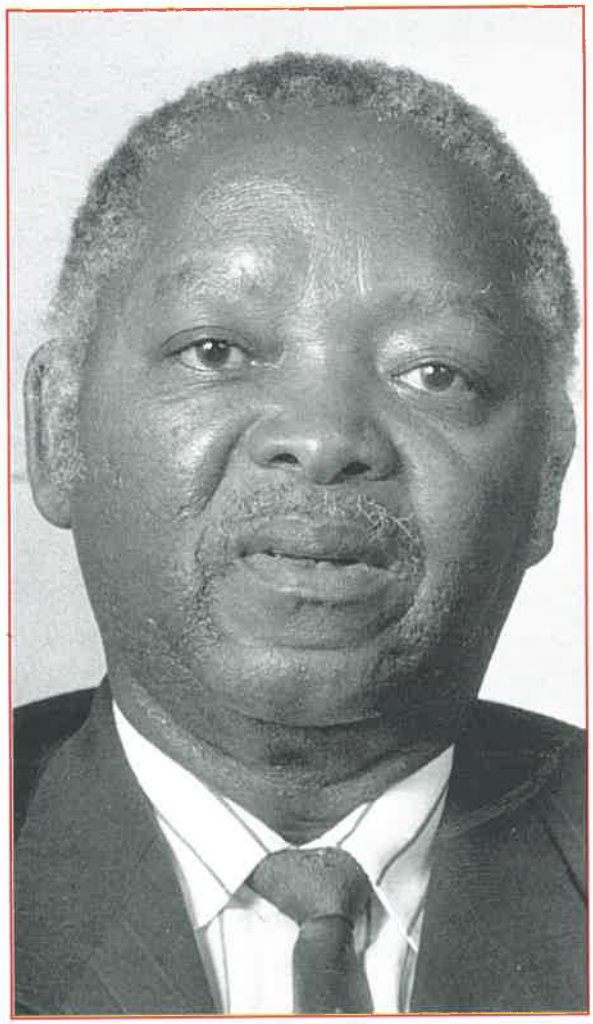
A founding member of the BDP, in 1965 he was elected to Parliament to represent Serowe South. Thereafter he served as the Minister of Home Affairs before retirement

Edison Setlhomo Masisi (1923-)

A founding member of the BDP, Edison Masisi was born in Moshupa. He attended Tiger Kloof on a Government bursary. Thereafter, form 1950-64 he made his living as a teacher. Elected as Moshupa's MP in 1965, he occupied numerous Cabinet portfolios until his retirement in 1999.

Peter Simako Mmusi (1929-1994)

Botswana's third Vice-President was born in Mmankgodi. His father worked in South Africa, resulting in Peter Mmusi spending much of his youth there at Krugersdorp and Randfontein. He returned to Botswana to attend St. Joseph's College in 1945-48. Thereafter, he attended Maraisal Teacher Training College 1948-51. He taught at St. Joseph's, 1951-56, and Lobatse 1956-



61. From 1961-63 he served as an Assistant Clerk to Legco. He was promoted as Botswana's first Commissioner of Labour, 1965-74. He served as the Assistant Minister of Finance and Development Planning, 1974-76, Minister of Commerce and Industry 1977, Minister of Home Affairs 1977-79, Minister of Works, 1978-80, Minister of Finance and Development Planning, 1980-89. He was Vice-President from 1982 to 1992, during which time he also served as Chairman of BDP.

Tsheko Tsheko (1923-69)

Born in Ngamiland, Tsheko was educated at the Maun Tribal School and Tiger Kloof before becoming a teacher in Francistown in 1943. From 1945-64 he worked in the Batawana Tribal Administration, becoming the Tribal Secretary. Elected to Parliament in 1965, he served in Cabinet as the Minister of Agriculture from 1966-69.

Archelaus Moleleki Tsoebebe (1904-1984)

An educator, civil servant, and union organizer before becoming a founder member of the BDP, Archelaus Tsoebebe was born in Matatiele, Lesotho. He attended Lovedale and Fort Hare College. Between 1932 and 1938 he served as Principal of the Bakgatla National School in Mochudi. There, in 1937, he founded the Bechuanaland Protectorate African Teachers Association and served as its first Secretary-General in 1937-39. He subsequently joined the civil service and in 1949 founded the Bechuanaland Civil servants Association, of which he was President until 1959. He was elected to the Bamangwato Tribal Council in 1960 and between 1961-64 served on Legco. Tsoebebe was initially attracted to the BPP, but was soon disappointed at its failure to effectively recruit rural support. He helped found the BDP, becoming the Party's first Vice-President in 1962. From 1965-69 he represented Bobonong in Parliament and served as minister of Works and Communications.

Lenyeletse Seretse (1921-1982)

Botswana's second Vice-President was born in Serowe. A founder member of the BDP, he grew up as a close friend and confidant of his cousin Seretse Khama. In 1937 he joined Khama in studying at Tiger Kloof. After completing his studies he was appointed by Tshekedi Khama to be the acting head of Seretse Khama's Malekantwa age regiment.

In the early 1950s Lenyeletse was among the young intellectuals who formed the Bamangwato National Congress to press for local reform and Khama's return from exile. Upon Khama's return he acted as his Secretary. Thereafter, in 1957, he was elected into the reformed Bangwato Tribal Council. In 1958 he formed the Serowe Workers Union, which took up the cause of working conditions for employees of local traders. A year later, the Union became part of the new Bechuanaland Protectorate Workers Union.

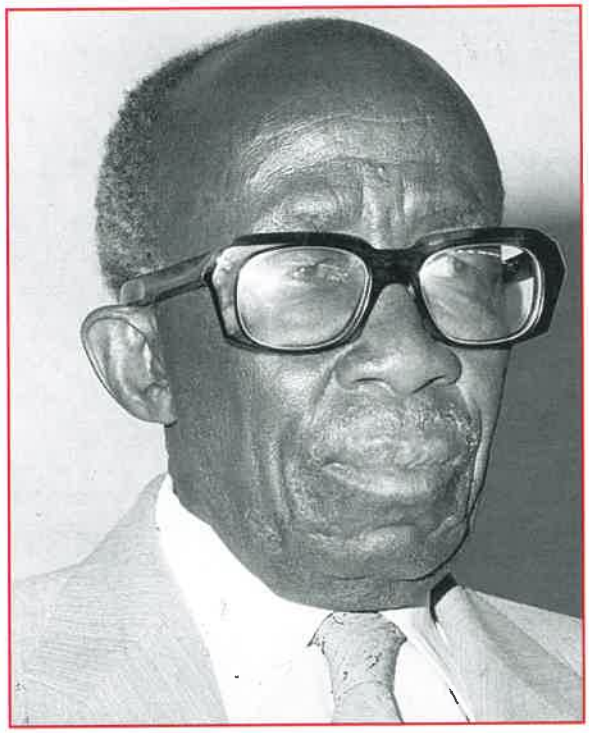
During the same period he was very active in promoting sports and cultural activities, including public debates, as the founder and Chairman of the Serowe Social Club. In 1960 Khama deputised Lenyeletse to look after the exile ANC delegation led by Oliver Tambo, who were given temporary sanctuary in Serowe.

A member of the African Council, in 1961 he turned down approaches from the BPP. Instead, he was among those urging Khama to form a new political movement. In 1965 he refused to stand for Parliament, preferring to concentrate on local politics and business interests in the Central District. Khama, nonetheless, often called him, upon to act as an advisor and right hand man. In the process he served on a number of Commissions of Enquiry.

In 1974 he was elected MP for Boteti. Thereafter he served in several cabinet portfolios before becoming Vice-President in 1980, where he remained until his death two years later.

Goareng Segotso Mosinyi (1915-)

A founder member of the BDP, Goareng Mosinyi was born a member of the Bakaa royal family at Kalamare. From 1943-48 Mosinyi served as the Bangwato Tribal Treasurer. He supported Seretse during the 1948-49 crisis and in 1950 accompanied him into exile at Lobatse. After 1956 Mosinyi became a member of the reformed Bangwato Tribal Council, the African Council and Legco. He served as MP for Shoshong from 1965-89.



Gaefalale G. Sebeso (1908-1992)

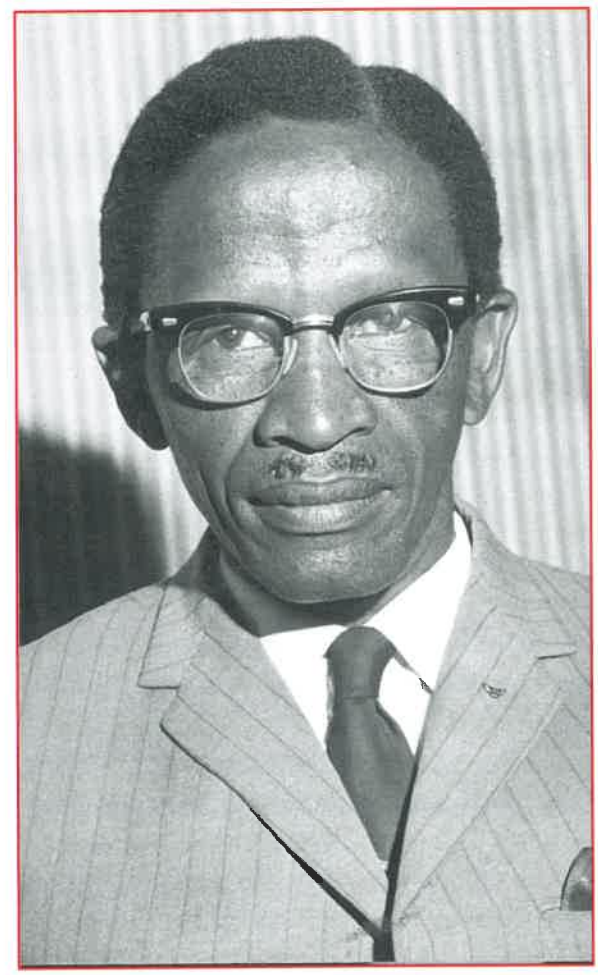
For many years was the Headteacher at the Shoshong Primary School. He served in the army during World War II. From 1953-64 he further served as the Sub-African Authority for Palapye and later Mahalapye. In 1965 he won the Tswapong South Constituency, which he retained until his retirement in 1989.

Benjamin Stienberg (c.1920-1975)

Born in Lobatse, Benjamin Stienberg was a Serowe trader and cattle dealer with Protectorate wide business interests, before becoming involved in politics as a member of the European Advisory Council. The only white to be a leading founder member of the BDP, Stienberg served as Treasurer on the Party's first Executive Committee. In 1965 he was elected MP for Boteti, retaining the seat until his retirement in 1974.

Benjamin Thema (1912-78)

Ben Thema was a prominent scholar. A product of Tiger Kloof and Healdtown, in 1936 Thema became the Setswana teacher at Tiger Kloof. He was the first President of the Bechuanaland Students Association, formed in 1939. In 1946 he

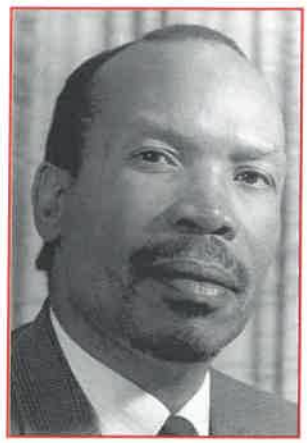


founded the Tshidi Barolong Secondary School in Mafikeng and served as its Principal until 1955. In 1948 Thema obtained a Master's Degree in Education. From 1955-64 he served as the Headmaster of Moeng College, resigning to enter politics during the later year. In 1965 he was Elected as the MP for Lobatse, and thereafter served as Botswana's first Minister of Education until his retirement in 1974. He was awarded an MBE in 1962. 40

Three wise men

There can be little doubt that Botswana's thirty-six years of peaceful progress can in part be attributed to superior leadership.

While their individual histories differ, Botswana's three Presidents share qualities that have served the nation well. All have been statesmen who in word and deed combined pragmatism with a genuinely national vision. Although bestowed with the most powerful political post in the land all three have exercised their authority with humility that in each case has been reflected in a comforting sense of humour. In this respect they have each become embodiments of what is unique, as well as universal, about Botswana's post-colonial path of democratic development.



Sir Seretse Khama
(1965 – 1980)

Sir Ketumile Masire
(1980 – 1998)

Festus G. Mogae
(1998 –)

Seretse Goitsebeng Khama

The late first President was a statesman who always seemed to possess an innate sense of vision about what his people could achieve if given the freedom to find and fulfill their destiny.

Born in Serowe in 1921 as the son and heir of Kgosi Sekgoma II of Bangwato, he was only four years old when his father died. Five years later, he was orphaned when his mother, Tebogo Khama (maiden name Kebailele), died suddenly at Mafikeng following an operation.

Following his father's death, Seretse's uncle Tshekedi Khama acted as his guardian as well as regent. Determined that his nephew would be prepared for a life of leadership, Tshekedi took an active interest in Seretse's education. After finishing his primary education at Khama Memorial School in Serowe, Seretse pursued his secondary studies at Adams College, Tiger Kloof and Lovedale.

Completing his BA at Fort Hare in 1944, Seretse went on to do legal studies at the University of Witwatersrand. But neither his uncle nor the Bangwato in general were happy when they received reports about the racism that black students then faced on campus. It was, therefore, decided to send Seretse to finish his legal studies in the UK, where he was enrolled at Oxford.

Seretse was doing further training at Inns Court in London in 1947 when he met and fell in love with a young professional English lady named Ruth Williams. The following year they were married despite Tshekedi's objection.

Back in Serowe, Tshekedi asked Seretse to choose between his wife and his people. But, at a momentous kgotla meeting in June 1949, Seretse turned the tables by asking the Bangwato directly to choose between himself, with his wife, and

Tshekedi. Only 17 dikgosana and fewer than 40 commoners backed Tshekedi; an estimated 8 000 stood up and thundered their applause for Seretse.

Racial prejudices within the British Government, as well as white South African and Southern Rhodesian society, played an important role in its decision to banish Seretse and Ruth from Botswana. The British Dominions Office initially set up an enquiry to establish grounds for preventing Seretse from assuming bogosi. But its report was suppressed when it concluded that the

only objection to Seretse was based on external feelings about his racially mixed marriage.

In 1950 Seretse was invited to London for talks and offered a senior position in Jamaica. When Seretse refused, the British banned him from returning to Botswana and suspended forever his right to assume bogosi.

Although their forced exile in London turned Seretse and Ruth into international celebrities, for six long years both Labour and Conservative Party Governments upheld the ban. While in the UK, Seretse interacted with many other emerging nationalist leaders, including Forbes Burnham of Guyana, Dawda Jawara of Gambia, Hastings Banda of Malawi, Michael Manley of Jamaica, Harry Nkumbula of Zambia, Charles Njonjo of Kenya (an old Fort Hare friend) and another royal exile, King Mutesa II of Uganda. He also hosted a number of black American visitors, including an aspiring young actor named Sydney Poitier.

Late in 1956 Seretse was finally allowed to return home. By then he and Tshekedi had long reconciled. Both joined hands to reform the politics of GammaNgwato while attracting investment into the local economy by encouraging mineral prospecting. This initiative ultimately bore fruit in the form of the Selebi-Phikwe and Orapa mines. Upon his return Seretse also began to reveal his national vision, while speaking out against those who wanted Botswana to join the white settler dominated Central African Federation.

In 1963 Seretse was offered bogosi but refused. In the same year, he, along with Ketumile Masire and Moutlakgola Nwako, played a leading role at the Lobatse Conference that adopted a non-racial, one-person one vote, Constitution.

Seretse became the first Prime Minister of Bechuanaland after his party won an overwhelming mandate in the March 1965 general election. Once installed his Government decided to move towards independence as a sovereign republic.

Under Seretse's presidency, Botswana was transformed from being one of the world's five poorest countries to an international model of human rights as well as economic development. Through his statesmanship, Botswana was also able to maintain itself as an island of peace while surrounded by hostile white minority regimes. A firm pragmatist, Seretse offset Botswana's then military and economic weakness vis-à-vis the forces of Apartheid by making Botswana a showcase of African non-racialism, moderation and democratic rule.

Quett Ketumile Masire

Botswana's second President was born in Kanye in 1925 to parents of common descent. Until he was 13, Quett Ketumile Masire spent much of his time as a herd boy. Thereafter, at Rachele Primary School, he showed remarkable academic aptitude, winning a Government bursary to attend Tiger Kloof secondary school in 1944. Both of Masire's parents died in 1946. This development caused him to abandon his plans to attend University on a further bursary. Instead he acquired a teachers certificate so that he could assume responsibility for his five younger siblings.

In 1950 he became headmaster of the new Kanye Junior Secondary School (now Seepapitso Senior Secondary School), where he taught until 1955. During these years, he maintained his lifelong passion for agriculture. Once he could afford a tractor he decided to become a fulltime farmer. His modern methods of cultivation were initially derided by some of his neighbours. But big yields brought him recognition. In 1957, he became the first African in the Protectorate to be awarded a Master Farmer's Certificate.

Despite several run-ins with his Kgosi, Bathoen II, Masire was regularly appointed or elected to various Bangwaketse development committees. From 1958 he began to acquire a national reputation as the Botswana editor of the Naledi ya Batswana/African Echo newspaper. It was in this role that he first met Seretse Khama.

In 1961 Masire was elected to the reformed African Council and LEGCO, being the only commoner from the southern Protectorate to be elected to the latter body. Later in the year, he was approached by Seretse and others to play the leading role in organising the fledgling BDP. Drawing on his many newspaper and educational contacts, Masire quickly established an organisational network that became the basis for the BDP's overwhelming success in the 1965 general election. He also established and edited Therisanyo, the party paper that appeared regularly between 1964-67.

From the beginning, the BDP was to a great extent a partnership between Seretse's vision and charisma and Masire's energy and organisational ability.

In 1966 Masire became Botswana's first Vice-President and Minister of Finance and (later) Development Planning (MFDP). By this time he had come to favour an all out effort to lift the country out of its then extreme poverty. His programme channeled foreign aid, loans, and mining revenues into the development of educational, health, power and transport and communications infrastructure, while encouraging small-scale services and industries. Less immediately successful efforts were made in promoting commercial agriculture.

During the 1960s Masire's dynamic approach was unpopular with some conservative bureaucrats, while other colleagues resented his pre-eminent influence over national policy. But, Seretse kept his faith in Masire and the two formed an effective governing partnership that mirrored their complementary leadership of the BDP.

In 1969 Masire suffered a setback when he lost his Kanye Parliamentary seat to his old rival Bathoen. Seretse, however, retained him as Vice-President and a specially elected Member of Parliament. In 1974 and again in 1979, he won convincing victories in the Ngwaketse West constituency. By then the success of his development plans had gained him increasing respect and political clout.

Masire succeeded to the Presidency in 1980 with the overwhelming support of his party's Parliamentary Caucus. He was subsequently led the BDP electoral triumphs in 1984,1989 and 1994. Seeing the country through severe drought and an early 1980s slump in diamond sales, Masire's Presidency was characterized by continued high rates of economic growth and social development

Sir Ketumile Masire

After successfully leading the BDP to the 1999 general elections, Mr. Festus Mogae took an oath of office administered by Chief Justice Julian Nganunu

Festus Gontebanye Mogae

Born in 1939, Botswana's third President first made his mark through his academic achievements. A top student at Moeng College, he went on to take a BA (Honours) in Economics at Oxford and an MA in Development Economics at Sussex University in the UK. While still a student in Britain, he wrote an influential article in Kutlwano suggesting that the 30th of September, then celebrated as Protectorate Day, be retained as a national holiday.

In 1969 he joined the MFDP, where he became a protégé of Masire rising to the position of Permanent Secretary in 1975.

After a secondment as the Executive Director for Anglophone Africa at the IMF, he returned home to serve as the Governor of the Bank of Botswana from 1980-81. In 1982 he became President Masire's Permanent Secretary. He retired from the civil service in 1989 when he was specially elected to Parliament and appointed Minister of Finance and Development Planning.

Mogae was appointed Vice-President in 1992. In 1994 he won the Palapye constituency, further signaling his transformation into a popular politician. During this period he established himself as a strong advocate of fiscal responsibility and accelerated private sector development.

Since becoming President in April 1998, much of President Mogae's energy has been focused on meeting the challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, where his frank and forthright leadership has won him both domestic and international respect. 40

The house the party built

Sir Seretse Khama (left) congratulates Mr. Shamshad Ahmad Khan on the opening of Tsholetsa House

"Moshimane, I wish you all the luck and all the success, but I doubt if you will raise R20, 000," Sir Seretse Khama said.

The President's remarks were directed at Mr. Shamshad Ahmad Khan, whom Sir Seretse had taken to calling Moshimane. Mr. Khan, then Deputy Mayor of Gaborone under Mr. Wellie Seboni, had dreamt the idea of the Botswana Democratic Party putting up a building that would be rented out, as well as serving as the party's headquarters. It so happened that one day in 1970, the party treasurer - Mr. Moutlakgola Nwako - approached Mr. Khan with something that had clearly been a source of worry for him. The party had just come of the 1969 General Elections, and its coffers were empty. The membership was not so big, and therefore members' contributions alone could not sustain the party. Mr. Nwako's feeling was that the party should identify some permanent income generating ventures. Obuseng Brothers, a shop in African Mall, was up for sale, and Mr. Nwako talked to some people about the feasibility of the party buying the shop. Among the people he talked to was Mr. Khan, who was one of the first people to run a store in the Gaborone Main Mall. Mr. Khan's response was not encouraging. He felt the party was not well equipped to operate a store. He feared that the party could lose money in what could turn out to be a white elephant. He suggested a more grand idea.

"I had just returned from a trip to Zambia. Right in the middle of Lusaka, I had seen a building called UNIP House, which belonged to the ruling party in Zambia. I suggested to Mr. Nwako that since we had a permanent plot, why not put up a building that could rent out. Mr. Nwako thought it was a good idea, and asked me to talk to the party chairman," Mr. Khan says.

At the time, the party chairman was Sir Seretse. A meeting was set up, but the President was not convinced about the wisdom of having such a big property in the party's name. At a subsequent meeting, Mr. Khan came more determined to convince his friend and leader that his way was the only feasible manner the BDP could be financially self-reliant.

"I pointed out that all main parties in the world had properties that gave them income. I even gave him the example of our neighbour, UNIP in Zambia. He was still skeptical, but asked me to address his colleagues at an informal Cabinet meeting. Fortunately, I got them to see the wisdom of the whole thing, and they agreed," Mr. Khan recalls.

The executive committee appointed a subcommittee to handle the project. Known as the Tsholetsa House Building Sub-Committee, the team comprised Mr. Nwako as its chairman, and Mr. Khan as the secretary/treasurer. Mr. Jimmy Haskins and Mr. Kebatlamang Morake were additional members. After toying around with names like BDP House, and Domkrag House, Tsholetsa House was found to be the suitable name for the party's ambitious project.

Mr. Nwako and Mr. Khan were entrusted with fundraising, and they had agreed to appeal to all businesses and well-wishers of the party to support the project. That was how it came to be that on Friday 28 July 1970, the two gentlemen went to see Sir Seretse at the State House and asked him that as the party leader he should have the honour to pledge his contribution before anybody else. Though he was still skeptical, he pledged what Mr. Khan calls "a handsome sum of R2, 000" and made his remark to Moshimane.

When they left the State House that afternoon, the men went to Molepolole to see the business community there as well as well-wishers, before heading for Thamaga. That evening, Mr. Khan placed a telephone call to the State House from Moshupa, where they spent the night at his in-laws' place. He delightfully told the President that

The night of the official opening of the old Tsholetsa House

R20, 000 had been raised in one afternoon. The following morning they went to Kanye to see a young BDP councillor, who was also a budding businessman, Mr. Satar Dada. The Dada family donated a Datsun van valued at R1 300 for the committee to raffle. The raffle tickets raised R3 600.

The weekend travelling became routine as Mr. Nwako and Mr. Khan went to other areas.

"It was a Herculean task. Travelling was difficult because there was no tarred road. As soon as you left Old Naledi you hit gravel road. The business community was very small. There were chain stores. We only had the traditional trader in the countryside that gave generously. Each trader pledged as much as R2, 000, which was a lot of money in those days," Mr. Khan says.

In the meantime, the party had commissioned a firm of architects in Mafikeng, I. Aronowitz & Co. to come up with the drawings for Tsholetsa House.

On 20 October 1972, the year of the BDP's tenth anniversary, the R380, 000 project - Tsholetsa House - was officially opened by party leader, Sir Seretse Khama. Afterwards, Sir Seretse walked to Mr. Khan, shook his hand, and said: "Moshimane, I never thought you would make it. It seemed such a wild dream."

The party occupied the ground floor, while the top two floors were leased out to government at the rate of 28 cents per square feet. Over the years, Tsholetsa House's tenants included the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. Following a major facelift, Tsholetsa House is today home to a local cellular phone company, Mascom.

Justifiably, the man who dreamt it all remains proud of the imposing structure that remains an important part of Gaborone's landscape. 40

Former South African President Nelson Mandela (left) with Sir Ketumile Masire

Meeting Sir Ketumile

One of the architects of the Botswana Democratic Party's constitution at the organisation's birth, Ketumile Masire, talks of the crucial balancing act that pre-occupied the working committee that drafted the founding document.

Though the committee's work had been somewhat eased by the fact that Seretse Khama had produced a draft that broadly defined the parameters on which to work, there were two factors that had to be constantly borne in mind. These were tribalism and chieftainship. There was fear at the time that once independence came, the territory would disinte-

grate into tribal groupings each seeking to establish itself as an independent country. The draftsmen tried to circumvent this prospect by emphasising the "national" nature of the party. For this reason, it was suggested that the party should be called Bechuanaland National Democratic Party.

Masire says chieftainship also warranted serious consideration because it can be divisive. This, he admits, is a paradox because while chieftain unites a tribe, it can be divisive at a national level.

"A good tribesman," he says, "is taught to lay his life for his chief. Sometimes there comes a time when you have to lay your life for the chief against principles which are in the interests of a nation."

Chiefs had become accustomed to indirect rule where the colonial administration ruled through them. The advent of independence would bring a paradigm shift. An elected government would not go through the chiefs, but directly to the people.

It was important nonetheless that the status quo was not abruptly disrupted.

This, according to Masire, was made essential by the fact that "there was a lot of good that could come from cooperating with the chiefs."

The BDP constitution was made with these factors in mind. At a meeting held in Mahalapye in January 1962, the committee presented its draft, which went on to be adopted with some amendment. One such amendment was the deletion of the word "national" from the name of the party.

From humble beginnings, the BDP has grown in strength and stature and since independence, it has been in government. Masire, the party's foot soldier who traversed the width and breath of the country canvassing for support, recruiting activists and setting up structures of the new party, attributes the party's continued electoral success to the way it approached people. He says BDP recognised Batswana's down to earth demeanour and behaved like them. While its main rival at the time, Botswana Peoples Party (BPP), chose aggressive and emotive rhetoric, BDP chose a conciliatory approach projecting itself as a responsible organisation worth of trust. Another factor that Masire cites for the success of the party in its early years is the quality and calibre of activists it managed to get into its ranks.

One of his biggest 'catches' in the early days of the party was Englishman Kgabo. Masire sings praise for Kgabo's political aptitude. "A ball of fire," is how he describes Kgabo.

In a space of three years, BDP managed to spread its presence throughout the country. In the 1965 general election, it was the only party that fielded candidates in all the 31 constituencies of the time.

Masire says this was made possible by hard work. Operating under severe budgetary limitation, the party had to rely on the resources of the individual cadres to facilitate its work.

As a party that was concerned with nation building, it was imperative for the BDP to project a countrywide presence.

"We knew that it would be very dangerous if we were seen to be paying attention to one or other of the entities of the nation."

"We knew that it would be very dangerous if we were seen to be paying attention to one or other of the entities of the nation."

Although BDP has always exhibited high levels of discipline and unity, there have been times when it was hit by serious crisis. In the 1994 general elections the party found itself conceding 13 parliamentary seats to the opposition. Masire admits that the performance of the party in those elections was poor. At the time, the party was severely polarised into rival factions. Masire blames that division for the performance of the party in that year's general election. That, he says, should serve as a lesson for the party. It was a mistake that could have easily cost the party electoral victory. 40

The party with a common touch

"Ka di-congress o ne o hitlhela diministara di thinkgentse ko dipitseng go apeilwe,"
– Kebatlamang Morake
BDP's first Executive Secretary

The man who holds the record of Botswana's longest serving minister of education never planned for a career in politics. In a way, politics came looking for him. Kebatlamang Morake recalls an unexpected visit by James Haskins one Thursday afternoon in 1965. Haskins had been asked to deliver a message to Morake, then working for the Post Office in Tonota, that Botswana Democratic Party leaders, Seretse Khama and Quett Masire, wanted to see him in Lobatse that Saturday.

Morake had joined the party three years earlier following a public rally addressed by secretary general, Masire. Since then, he had made it a habit not to miss the BDP's meetings in his area. He could

have caught the eye of the BDP's leaders because he never ceased to ask questions.

Travelling by train on Friday night, he was met by Masire in Lobatse the following morning who took him to Cumberland Hotel. After a bath in Masire's room, he was invited for breakfast in the restaurant. They were soon joined at the table by Khama.

"Seretse told me that they wanted me to be active in the party. I asked how. He said they wanted me to be the party's executive secretary. He said they wanted me to resign from my job immediately because they needed someone to run the party office urgently," Morake recalls.

He left Lobatse on Sunday evening. In his bag was a cheque from the BDP that he was to hand over to his employers together with his resignation letter on Monday morning in lieu of notice.

The BDP's main office was initially in Kanye because that was where the secretary general was based. When Morake assumed his new duties, he had to set up the Gaborone office from scartch with the help of Masire. Having been appointed Deputy Prime Minister after the 1965 elections, Masire had official residence. It was in this house that he accommodated Morake. The party had no office space in Gaborone. When Masire went to work in the morning, Morake used the Deputy Prime Minister's home office as his work station. Eventually, the party built a small house in Bontleng where Morake was housed. A room was set aside as the party office. On a visit to see the house, Khama joked to Morake: "*Monna KP, golo ha MaDokrag a lekantse wena hela. Rona ba ba leele maoto a ka lala a tswetse ko ntle.*"

It was from here that Morake, almost single handedly, oversaw the revival of BDP structures countrywide, and set up new ones. The secretariat's other employees were a typist and a driver. To sharpen his party administrative skills, it was arranged for Morake to be seconded to various political parties around the world. In 1966, he spent a month each with the Labour Party, and the Conservatives in Britain. He then proceeded to what was then known as West Germany to spend another month at the head office of the Social Democratic Party. Later that year, he spent a week each in Kenya and Tanzania where he met Jomo Kenyatta and Julius Nyerere respectively.

The team that was assembled by Khama and Masire consisted of credible people who were prominent in their societies. But even as they were men and women of social standing they never lost their humility.

It was as executive secretary that Morake toured every part of Botswana using the secretariat's only vehicle, a Chevrolet truck. Since there were no national newspapers and radio's transmission was limited, the only way to popularise the party in the countryside was for party activists to go out. This was what Morake did.

In Gaborone, he kept abreast with developments in government by attending informal cabinet meetings. At these meetings, members of cabinet met without their officials.

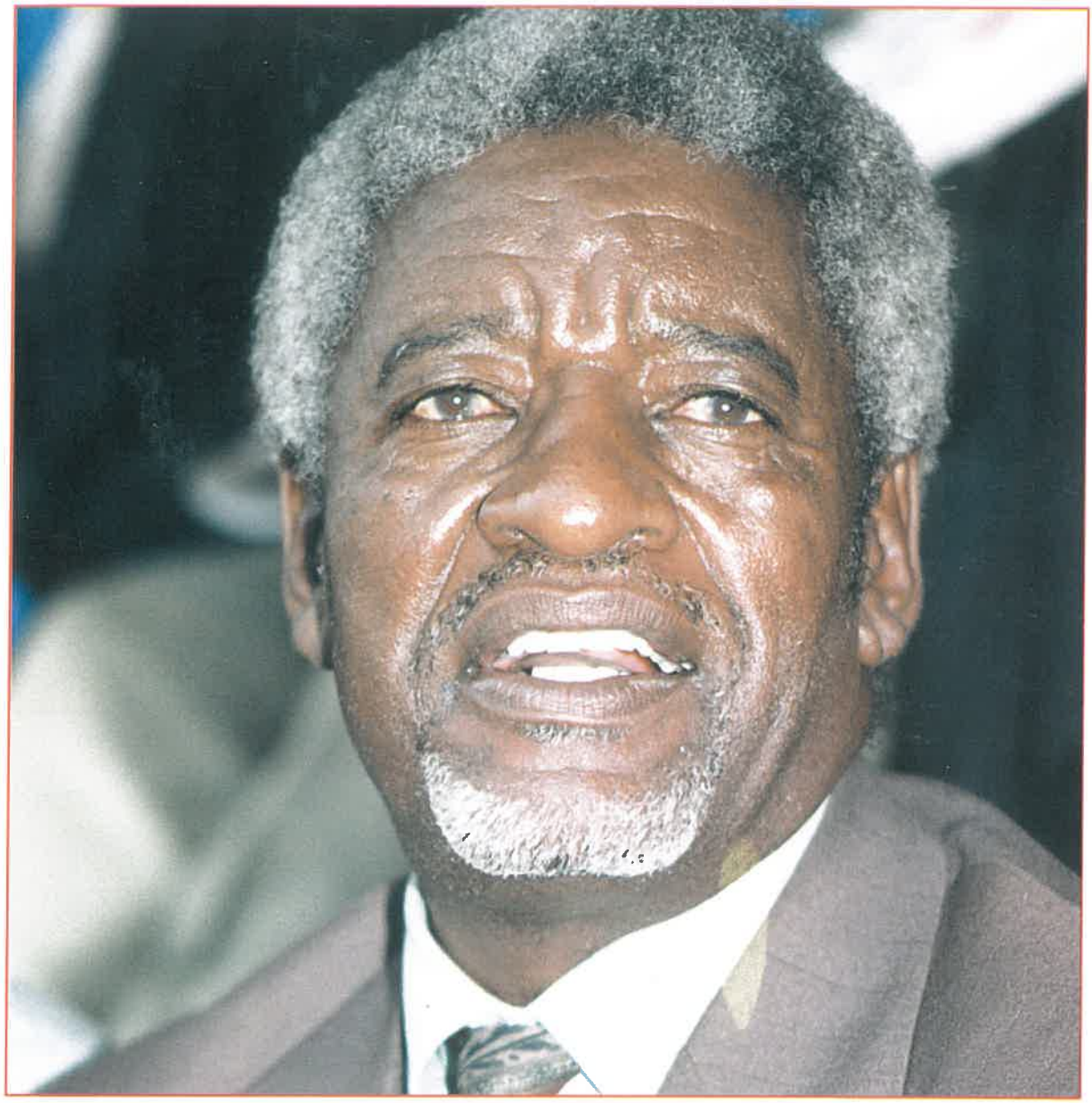
Going into Parliament as a Sepecially Elected MP in 1969, Morake was made Assistant Minister in Office of the President responsible for Information and Broadcasting, before transfaring to the Ministry of Local Government. He quit the executive secretary's office in 1971. In 1974, he was appointed Minister of Education, a portfolio he held until 1989, when he moved to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Like all members who were attracted to the BDP in its years, Morake says the party spoke the language of the people. The team that was assembled by Khama and Masire consisted of credible people who were prominent in their societies. But even as they were men and women of social standing they never lost their humility.

"*Ka di-congress o ne o hitlhela diministara di thinkgentse ko dipitseng go apeilwe,*" Morake recalls.

He advises the present leadership to retain this common touch that has ensured that the party did not become an elitist club. 40

A life of service



Lemme Makgekgenene

One of the members of Botswana's first Parliament and Botswana Democratic Party veteran, Lemme Makgekgenene was nearly lost to the party. A keen follower of political developments since his student days in South Africa, he was initially a Botswana Peoples Party (BPP) well-wisher. But there was something he did not like about the BPP: its pre-occupation with South African politics while paying little attention to the local situation.

A show of unity and cohesion as President Festus Mogae launches BDP parliamentary candidates for Gaborone constituencies in 1999

The BDP was different. Not only was it original in thought, it also appeared to have a fine grasp of issues that were of concern to the people of Bechuanaland Protectorate. There was another important difference between the two organisations. While BPP had a militant streak, BDP adopted a more mature and moderate approach to questions of the day. In BPP, one were considered a hero only if their political activity had landed them in prison. The party leader, Philip Matante, would pin a medal bearing the inscription 'PG' on the newly freed prisoner's lapel. Although known to be Matante's initials, the party's official explanation was that the 'PG' on the medal stood for Prison Graduate. Makgekgenene found this too childish, and was further convinced that BPP had no long-term vision for the country. On 24 August 1962, he officially joined the six-month old BDP.

He soon took over as secretary of the Tonota Branch, tasked with helping to popularise the party in the area, and issuing membership cards to new members. By foot and bicycle, he set about his new mission with enthusiasm that fired all BDP activists of the time. At the time, a vehicle was a luxury that people, especially activists of a new party without funds, had to do without. In the run-up to the 1965 general elections, the party weighed all the 31 constituencies to determine which ones were safe. It was decided that the party's limited resources would be channeled towards the marginal constituencies. Tonota was deemed to be a safe constituency, so Makgekgenene - BDP's parliamentary candidate in the area - had to do without a party vehicle until a few weeks before the elections. It fell on BDP member and businessman David Morgan to hire a vehicle for Makgekgenene's campaign. The campaign trail entailed pointing out the difference between the contesting parties, as well as explaining the process of voting. Though the colonial government had shown election films throughout the country to explain the exercise that Batswana would engage in, most still did not understand the electoral process. It was at these meetings that Makgekgenene taught the people the BDP's constitution and objectives.

When the election results were announced, Makgekgenene had carried the Tonota constituency.

He recalls: "It was a great achievement. I felt very proud and happy that we were getting into self-rule that would ultimately lead to independence."

The 1965 election heralded the end of an old era. Batswana nationalists were irked by the creeping racism that was infiltrating from South Africa. In Francistown, for instance, the only hotel in the town - Grand Hotel - did not admit Blacks in its bar and restaurant. Makgekgenene remembers the mood of enthusiasm when the first MPs met in Lobatse. With the exception of Seretse Khama, Quett Masire, and others who had been members of Legco, the rest were new to legislative matters and had to learn the ropes as they went about governing the country.

His first cabinet appointment came on 10 April 1972 when he was made Assistant Minister of Finance and Development to Masire. He went on to serve in other portfolios as a senior minister, and has also had a stint as Deputy Speaker, until he retired in 1999.

Makgekgenene's credits the cohesion and respect that early party members showed each other for the emergence of the BDP as a strong force.

"The party's policies were practical. Even though there were no funds, there was some improvement along the line promised the electorate. We had a strong foundation because of Seretse's good leadership. He was a respected figure, and that respect rubbed on to the party members. After his death, Masire managed to carry the party forward because he had gain invaluable experience," Makgekgenene says.

He cautions that there are still a lot of challenges ahead for both the party and the country.

"BDP youth must acquaint themselves with what is taking place throughout the world. They must equal or better the opposition if they want to continue to survive like we have survived, especially in organisational matters," he says.

Any regrets?

"I can't regret anything. I have played my part, although not very significantly. We have done very well, and one can pride oneself about the achievements of the party." 40

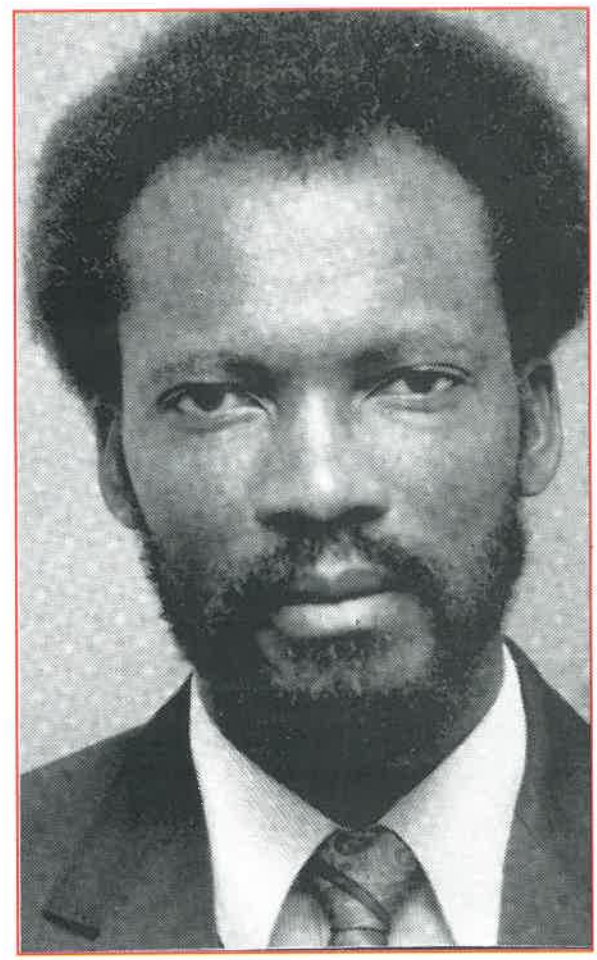
BDP has been fortunate to have dedicated cadres like Kagelelo Magapa, Johnnie Swartz, Kelothoko Seloma and Michael Tshipinare

Empowering the marginalised

Seretse Khama defined the Botswana Democratic Party's vision for the youth at the party's Annual Conference in Mochudi in 1977.

"What I ask of the young people of Botswana is that they should realise that they are the generation of today and tomorrow. The future of this country rests in their hands. Many of us who are gathered here today are on our way out having made our contribution as best we could to the welfare of our country. We have laid the foundation for the development of a sound democracy; we have launched the country on the path of economic development; we have imbued the nation with the spirit of self-reliance and in the final analysis, we have enabled our various tribes and ethnic groups to seek and find each other with the objective of moulding a united nation which we Batswana have undoubtedly become. All that we seek at this juncture is, therefore, to involve young Batswana in the activities which have made the Botswana Democratic Party a great party because in all our efforts and endeavours we have been guided by one ideal, and one ideal only, and that is the ideal of Kagisano, the ideal which has made our country a true model of democracy," Khama said

The youth took up the challenge that year by launching the BDP Youth Wing under the leadership of Leach Tlhomelang. This was borne out of realisation that, as the party needed to grow, the youth were in a better position to reach out to other young people. A formal youth structure was thought to be an ideal platform from where mobilisation of young people could be effected.



One of the founders of the BDP Youth Wing, Leach Tlhomelang

Out of different considerations, another important structure also came into being. What led to formation of the BDP Women's Wing was concern

about lack of women's representation in elective positions. Though women did most of the grassroots mobilisation, at election time they were often overlooked in favour of male candidates.

Kebatshabile Disele, one of the early advocates of women's empowerment in the BDP, recalls that it was difficult even for women to support a woman candidate. It appeared there was no realisation that merit, and not gender, should determine who assumed leadership.

"At the time, women didn't realise that they also had the right to stand for elections. Most women were of the opinion that their participation in politics only went as far as fundraising. Some of us felt that as women, we worked against each other by failing to recognise that women were also capable leaders," she says.

The emerging women's lobby in the party was of the view that women should be given an opportunity to debate issues of concern to them that could end up as policies and legislation. The women's movement took off gradually. At the party's seminars and workshops, women would meet on the side to share information on matters like increasing their earning potential, and how they could engage in income-generating activities. This was an important area since most of the women cadres were poor, and jobs were hard to come by. Women were also grappling with a lot of issues such access to pre-primary education, and the general quality of education for their children. The idea of a women's wing was to empower women, as well as enrich the BDP by broadening the political debate since women would raise issues that to men were often regarded as "non-issues" such as poverty alleviation among women.

About 20 years since formation of the BDP Women's Wing, the organ has tirelessly campaigned for recognition of women as capable leaders, as seen by an increase in the number of women representatives in councils, and Parliament, as well as in Cabinet. 40

Kebatshabile Disele

"Most women were of the opinion that their participation in politics only went as far as fundraising. Some of us felt that as women, we worked against each other by failing to recognise that women were also capable leaders."

Saying it in song

Music plays an important in BDP mobilisation

Following formation of the Botswana Democratic Party Youth Wing in 1977, there were numerous ideas exchanged on the role of young people in the party. There was consensus that youth should be tasked with attracting their peers into the BDP fold. The youth had to identify ways to go about this.

The 1980 BDP Young Wing Congress decided that party youth structures throughout the country should form choirs. Besides providing a recreational pastime for young people, music was seen a mobilisation vehicle. It was thought that music would offer young people a tool to interpret the party's stand on issues of interest to Batswana and spread the BDP message throughout the country. Choirs would also play a unifying role to complement government's national unity efforts. Many welcomed the idea of inculcating a culture of song at BDP events since it sat well with traditional Setswana culture.

After the congress, one of the first choirs to be formed was in Bontleng ward in the then Gaborone constituency. Known as Bontleng Choir, it was formed by some of the youth leaders of the time like Biki Suping, Josephine Mohutsiwa, and Moses

Ntwayagae, who was deputy chairman to Laughter Kopi in Gaborone. A few months after its formation, Bontleng Choir represented Gaborone at a BDP Youth Music Festival held in the capital's show grounds. The festival had attracted choirs from other parts of the country like Kanye, Mahalapye, Maun and Gantsi.

In February 1981, youth leaders met at Tsholetsa House to form a national choir. The choir's members were drawn from different Gaborone wards. The already established Bontleng Choir was absorbed into the new choir. It was this choir that would come to be known as International Choir. Ntwayagae was the choir's first chairperson, while Gaotlhaetse Matlhabaphiri was the conductor. Grace Petersen was the deputy conductor. When Matlhabaphiri assumed a diplomatic post to Sweden in 1985, Michael Tshipinare was handed the conductor's wand. Ntwayagae went on to succeed Petersen as deputy conductor.

BDP's choirs have played an important part in fundraising activities. The attempt to record the choir's music was in 1988. The songs were refined and re-recorded by the International Choir in 1989.

As one of the pioneers of the culture of song in the party, Ntwayagae is happy with the progress of BDP choirs throughout the country. He sees vast improvement in the composition and the art of singing itself.

Some of BDP's recorded albums include:
E busa ka ditlhopho
Go ya go ileng - 1962 - 1992
A millenium of opportunities
Puso ya batho ka batho 40

A BDP choir performing at a congress

President Festus Mogae

Looking ahead

"There is no comparable challenge to HIV/AIDS. It permeates everything: our budgeting system, service delivery, and social targets like poverty alleviation and localisation."

– **President Festus Mogae**

The third leader of the Botswana Democratic Party says for the party to continue to appeal to the voters, it must always strive to address issues that matter to Batswana. He identifies these as HIV/AIDS, poverty alleviation, employment generation, and education.

President Festus Mogae is both a general and a foot soldier in the war against HIV/AIDS. His view is that HIV/AIDS presents the single biggest challenge this nation has ever had to face.

"There is no comparable challenge to HIV/AIDS. It permeates everything: our budgeting system, service delivery, and social targets like poverty alleviation and localisation. It is reversing social indicators such as life expectancy. It affects our project implementation capacity. We lose our young professional to AIDS, and have to employ people from abroad. So, AIDS is incomparable to anything because of its ability to undermine our success everywhere. It hits us where it hurts most. It is perhaps the most unfair thing that ever happened to us," President Mogae says.

While he appreciates that the nation is awakening to the call to battle against AIDS, the President reveals that he is disappointed by the response to the programme aimed at prevention of mother to child HIV transmission. The disappointment comes from information about mothers who test HIV-positive, but refuse to enter the programme. This mostly comes about due to the attitude of the spouse, or in-laws.

"This depresses me. I had thought that when a family finds out that one of them is HIV-positive, the partner would get tested, and undergo the programme and cooperate with government to prevent their child from HIV infection. I am hoping that people will begin to respond to this programme," President Mogae points out.

He also talks of his disappointment at the underutilisation of funds made available to Botswana by the international community to fight HIV/AIDS. Last year, Botswana used only US$6.5 million out of US$20 million availed to the country. This year, expenditure record is not showing any dramatic improvement.

"There is an impression that AIDS is my problem, and that of the Minister of Health. I feel we could do more together as a nation," he says.

Even in the face of the challenges that confront the nation today, President Mogae is content that Botswana under the BDP leadership has made tremendous progress. In 1966, Botswana was one of the world's poorest countries, and some people even thought that Batswana were foolhardy to seek independence from Britain. The underdevelopment was further aggravated by natural disasters like droughts, and livestock diseases. As President Mogae points out, droughts presented a very serious challenge because the country's ability to provide drought relief that is provided presently was non-existent. The political climate in the region at the time posed another huge challenge for the newly independent state. Botswana was surround-

ed by hostile racist regimes in Rhodesia, South Africa, and South West Africa. This put Botswana in an awkward position of supporting the liberation movement in the region, yet maintaining economic ties with South Africa and Rhodesia. President Mogae calls it "the humiliation to be economically dependent on those we opposed, including for access to the rest of the world, and for any aid from outside having to be permitted by those regimes".

Says the President: "Just think of Botswana today. You can drive on the smallest Corolla from here (Gaborone) via Francistown, to Nata, Maun, Gantsi and back on tarred road. At independence, the whole country had about 3km of tarred road in Lobatse. We have provided a moderate and democratic inclusive administration. We didn't ostracise the opposition because we believed in multi-party democracy, market economy, and consultation."

He points out that throughout its 40 year existence, the BDP has come to be accepted by Batswana as a party to be trusted because it is realistic in its promises of what can be done, and always strives to achieve its set targets. President Mogae attributes the BDP's success over the years to various factors. The first is that the party's founders had the foresight to build it as a national movement from the beginning. This was in contrast to the other parties that were largely regional. The second factor is that it spoke the language that the people understood. It correctly identified the people's priorities as education, health, and water.

"As a party and government, we have a uniquely successful track record. Our correct economic management is better than most in Africa. Politically, there is no single issue on which we can't answer the opposition - be it poverty alleviation, physical infrastructure, education, or health," says President Mogae.

Having recently toured the country to address the nation on the importance of national unity, the President is of the opinion that whatever differences exist are manageable and are not of the magnitude that can lead of the disintegration of the nation. He draws satisfaction from the fact that people are discussing the national question openly, and that no views are suppressed. His view is that where there are disagreement on fundamental issues, dialogue should be maintained until consensus is built. But even as he encourages dialogue on all fundamental differences, the President warns against the tendency by some people to take Botswana's national unity for granted.

"It is important to remind ourselves of the benefits of unity and peace. Democracy means that we discuss our disagreements. If we continue to disagree, then we have to continue to discuss. The human condition is such that we have to continue working hard towards its improvement. It's an incremental process," he explains.

The President calls on the youth of Botswana to show self-reliance and hard work, and maintain national unity. He says they must continue to improve themselves because realisation of the ideals of Vision 2016 is in their hands. 40

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